A RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF

AN OPEN SYSTEM OF COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP, AND

FUNCTION AT GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GORDON-CONWELL

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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MAY 2011

To Nancy, Nicole, and Kiersten – *Love you the Whole World!*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

GLOSSARY

Closed System - A system that values and pursues itself; it keeps to itself and maintains status quo. Closed systems exclude by their nature, both within and without.

Communication - The exchange of information from one source to another.

Culture - The mostly informal and undefined suppositions that exist in any group of people. These assumptions are what make this group *this* group, and are used by the members as they adapt and respond to external and internal stimuli. Includes but not limited to perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

Function - The way in which an organism or group operates. A utilitarian feature.

Open System - A system that values and pursues interaction among its members, as well as with its external environment. Open systems are inclusive by nature.

Redemption - Includes the elements of ransom and release, along with restoration to wholeness and completeness of mankind. This is accomplished only through the activity of a loving, gracious, and merciful God.

Redemptive Culture - A culture that values and pursues the redemption of its membership as part of its purpose and function.

Redemptive Leadership - Leadership that values and pursues the redemption of those under its leadership.

Relationship - The interrelation and connection of one source with another. Key determinants are the nature and presence of communication and function.

System - The organization and function of related parts. The nature of the coordination, inter-relation, achievement, and functioning of the parts of an organization will determine the system that will be present.

ABSTRACT

This thesis-project will explore the importance, along with the contribution made, of an Open System of communication, relationship, and function to the redemptive culture of an organization. For purposes of this project, the organization to be examined will be the extension site of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (GCTS) in Jacksonville, FL (GCTS/Jax).

The thesis under girding and guiding this research project is that an Open System is an essential component of a redemptive culture, and is necessary to a redemptive process and outcome. Throughout this thesis-project, the concept of an Open System will be inexorably linked with redemptive culture.

The author became involved with the volunteer effort to secure an extension site of GCTS in Jacksonville about a year after the initial meetings. He was ultimately hired to the position of Assistant to the Dean in August 2005. Hence, his experience with Gordon-Conwell provides an inside perspective, and experiential knowledge and a bird's eye view of not only the procurement and development of GCTS/Jax; but also of the establishment of the system of communication, relationship, and function that would help to determine the organizational culture of the site.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO OPEN SYSTEMS

Introduction

On the evening of March 17, 2003, at the behest of the Rev. Dr. Robert L. Morris,

twenty-seven clergy and lay persons from across Jacksonville, representing numerous

denominational lines, gathered for an interest and organizational meeting. Also present

were Dr. and Mrs. Walter Kaiser, fifth president of Gordon-Conwell Theological

Seminary (GCTS), and Dr. Sid Bradley, Dean of the Charlotte campus for GCTS. The

purpose of the meeting was to discuss the possibility of, and ingredients for, the

establishment of a fourth GCTS location. Just over a year later, in May 2004, the

exploratory committee that had formed in Jacksonville presented a prospectus to the

GCTS Board of Trustees seeking approval for an extension site in Jacksonville. In

January 2005, the seminary Board of Trustees voted to extend an invitation for the

establishment and development of GCTS/Jax. Fund raising and student recruitment

began in earnest toward a February 2006 start of classes.

Nowhere on the agenda of that initial meeting, or of subsequent meetings, was

anything that directly or indirectly included *redemption* or producing *redemptive* results.

However, as the subject of the evening was pursuing a seminary for Jacksonville, it is fair

to conclude that redemption was at least subliminally on the minds of the clergy and laity

that gathered. Seminaries, after all, educate and train men and women for Christian

ministry in the church, in missions, and in para-church ministries. At least that is the case

with GCTS. Christian ministry, to be authentically and principally *Christian* ministry,

must have at its heart a desire to participate in the redemptive activity of God in the world. Hence, the ultimate desire in the hearts and minds of those present, even though unstated, was that redemption or redemptive activity would be the eventual result of their meeting together.

A further glance at that first agenda will not reveal an item that addresses *culture* or what type of *culture* would be established at an extension site in Jacksonville. Yet, everyone present felt the formation of a culture, although most on a sub-conscious level. They picked up on the mood, the 'feel', their level of comfort, how safe it felt, the openness or closed-ness of those leading, the level of inclusion or exclusion, and how power issues were being dealt with. Within the first hour of that meeting, a culture would begin to form that, in time, would influence, determine, and have as significant an impact on the development of the extension site as any decisions made that night.

A principle ingredient in determining the culture of an organization is the *system* of communication, relationship, and function. This thesis-project will address the impact that an Open System of communication, relationship, and function would have in helping to create a redemptive culture at GCTS/Jax. Before we move further into the exploration of that, a few side jaunts will be necessary in establishing a foundation and background.

Redemptive Leadership

As the title page of this project indicates, this is a thesis-project that completes the *Redemptive Leadership and Organizational Development* track of the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry program. Hence, this thesis-project ultimately concerns itself with Redemptive Leadership.

Redemptive Leadership, by definition and intent, is leadership that is redemptive in its form, function, and objective. To state this alternatively, in order for leadership to be Redemptive Leadership, the style or manner, the progression or priorities, and the result or focus of that leadership must be redemptive. To take this a step further, *how* and *why* we "do" leadership matters. At least it matters if a principle objective of our leadership is contributing to the redemption of those we lead. "How an organization reaches its goal is as important as the goals themselves."[1] An under girding and foundational assumption of Redemptive Leadership is that the leadership is redemptive, and concerned with redemptive purposes and outcomes.

A corollary of how and why we lead is *who* we are "playing to" – who is our audience? There are three options – our self, another, or an ideal. The Christian leader, having died to Christ (Gal 2:19; Rom 6:1-11), is called to have an audience of One (Gal 2:20; Mark 8:34). As a leader gives and trusts him/herself to Christ, the promise of scripture is that redemption will result (John 15). It flows from this that as a leader gives his/her leadership to Christ, the impact of that leadership will have redemptive results. This thought will be further developed in chapter two.

The following Redemptive Leadership model[2], developed by Dr.'s Harvey Powers and Rod Cooper, helps to illustrate and define the form, function, and objective of Redemptive Leadership:

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[1] Julie Gebauer and Don Lowman, *Closing the Engagement Gap: How Great Companies Unlock Employee Potential for Superior Results* (New York: Penguin Group, 2008), 127.
[2] Harvey Powers and Rod Cooper, "Redemptive Leadership and Organizational Development" (class lecture; Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; Boston, MA; May 2007).

COMPETENCY – skills and life experiences converge to create competencies. Competencies are *what* one does. It is necessary for the leader to have core competencies for a position; this *instills confidence* in his/her followers. Competency is also a key point of divergence for the Redemptive Leadership model when viewed alongside other leadership models available in the marketplace today. Whereas competency is the objective or finish line for most, it is the starting point for the Redemptive Leadership model.

PRINCIPLE – the underlying truths about, or rationale for, competencies. Principles explain what makes competencies effective – the *why* behind what one does. Principles transcend the present context or situation. This step in leadership development *imparts understanding*.

CHARACTER – as important as it is to understand the why component, if leadership is to become redemptive it needs to continue beyond understanding why we do what we do. The development of the person behind the behavior becomes the emphasis at this stage. This is about *who* the leader is. Character is about one's internal qualities. It is who we are when not in the spotlight, when no one is listening. Character is that which holds us to principles when the storms hit. Strife, stress, and strain not only reveal who we are and what we stand on; they are the catalysts for character development. Credibility is a chief character trait. Hence, character *imparts trust*.

TRANSFORMATIONAL – *How* and *when* we employ and live out what we know, and who we are becoming, can bring transformational possibilities for those we lead. Transformational leaders are changed individuals; and bring the opportunity for change to those they lead. Change that transforms occurs when the leader has a focus

beyond him or herself. The investment and focus at this stage is in the growth and development of others. An invitation is extended to others to join the leader in the journey, to share in the dance, to fulfill their potential. Transformational leadership *imparts healing*.

REDEMPTIVE – beyond change, beyond transformation, is redemption. The redemptive stage is possible only as one gives him or herself to Christ. The above stages are open to anyone willing to make the journey. Leaders are able to develop competencies, principles, character, and even bring about transformation to varying degrees through their own intention and will. Redemption, however, focuses on *whose* we are. Redemption includes release from bondage; it involves being ransomed, purchased, rescued, or delivered. It is people becoming what they were intended to be in creation - the image of God. It involves becoming remade. This will be further explored in Chapter 2. Redemptive Leadership *imparts hope*.

As is obvious from reading the above encapsulations, the emphasis of the redemptive approach to leadership is on the *person* of the leader, on the inner transformation, growth, and development of the leader. The progression is from doing to being, from accomplishment to becoming. "Leadership is a lifetime of lessons. It is not a set of do-it-yourself correspondence courses that can be worked through in a few months or years."[3] "God is continually developing you over a lifetime. His top priority is to conform you to the image of Christ for ministry with spiritual authority. Enduring fruitfulness flows out of being."[4]

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[3] J. Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988), 40.
[4] Clinton, *The Making of a Leader,* 54.

I would like to suggest that two foundational premises are present in this kind of leadership:

1. Redemptive Leadership is concerned with ministering out of *whose* we are. If the axiom "we are what we eat" contains a kernel of truth, it follows that we will become what or whom we give ourselves to. What we feed our heart, soul, mind, and strength upon (whose we are) will determine what and who we become (Matt 22:37).

2. Redemptive Leadership begins with whose we are and that, in turn, flows into and determines who or what we are becoming. All leaders incorporate personal competencies into their leadership. The redemptive leader, sold out to the person of Christ in his/her life, moves beyond competencies. The redemptive leader is on a progression toward personal redemption.

As was stated in the opening paragraph of this section, the big picture backdrop for this project is Redemptive Leadership. The intent of the author over the next five chapters is to demonstrate that a redemptive culture and an Open System are essential ingredients *in*, and crucial contributors *to*, the establishment and development of a redemptive organization, which in turn produces Redemptive Leaders.

Individuals into Groups

One of the axioms of leadership, with unknown origins, is that leaders *lead.* If, as one leads, it is discovered that there are no followers, the exercise is just that – exercise. With no followers, it is not leadership; it is merely taking a stroll. One of the determinants of leading is having followers. A point needs to be made at this juncture regarding groups and their development.

Every collection of individuals will proceed in one of two directions, as regards their connection and relationship to each other. They will either remain just that, a collection of individuals; or they will become a group. "The process of becoming a group is simultaneously (1) the growth and maintenance of relationships among a set of individuals who are doing something together; and (2) the actual accomplishment of whatever they are doing." [5] The guests at a restaurant, for example, are a collection of individuals; and will remain a collection of individuals, unless and until there is a defining event that establishes them as a group. "All groups start with some kind of originating event: (1) an environmental accident, (2) a decision by an 'originator' to bring a group of people together for some purpose, or (3), an advertised event or common experience that attracts a number of individuals."[6] The defining event at the March 2003 meeting was the exploration of what it would take to secure and develop an extension of GCTS in Jacksonville.

Culture - the Glue that Holds Groups Together

Every collection of individuals that becomes a group, with identifiable membership, mission, history, and function, develops a culture. Whether established formally or informally, officially or unofficially, by accident or intention, each and every collection of individuals that merits the designation "group" will establish a basic set of underlying assumptions about their existence, their values, their way of relating, their communication, and their function. "Culture, as it turns out, is not limited to countries

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[5] Edgar H Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 1985), 65.
[6] Edgar H Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership.* 3d ed. (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2004), 65.

but exists wherever groups exist."[7] "Without a group, there can be no culture; without culture, a group is a collection of people".[8] "Culture consists of the agreements we make with each other about how we relate to each other, how we communicate, how we behave."[9]

The culture of an organization is defined by Edgar Schein as "a pattern of basic assumptions - invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration - that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems."[10] These assumptions are as unstated as they are stated; as subtle as they are obvious; as invisible as they are identifiable. However, they are every bit as real as the people who create and operate by them. When individuals become a group, when the "me's" become a "we", their life together and what defines them is quite complex. It will touch and include everything that they as individuals bring to the party.

The culture that emerges will be unique to that grouping of individuals. When others are brought into and included in their group, the culture will be impacted and will respond accordingly. Thus, their culture will be living, changing, evolving and adapting. Cultures are dynamic rather than static.

For example, a summer camp staff gathers from across the southeastern United States prior to a month-long assignment together. The purpose is to get to know each other, as well as to discuss and finalize the logistics of their month. Ten of the eleven

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[7] Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership, xii.*
[8] Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 50.
[9] Judith E. Glaser, *Creating WE: Change I-Thinking to WE-Thinking, Build a Healthy, Thriving Organization* (Avon: Platinum Press, 2005), 122.
[10] Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 3d ed., 17.

assigned to that particular camp for that specific month are on time and present. However, the eleventh has had unfortunate car trouble en route, and will be joining the others twenty-four hours later. In that twenty-four hour time period, the ten will have become a group via shared experiences around their mission purpose. They will have introduced themselves, and will have spent time in intentional sharing, revealing pertinent pieces of their life story and activity over the past twelve months. The intent will be to take an initial step in becoming a team. They will have played together, perhaps in a mixer or by taking a hike. They will have eaten together, laughed together, gotten tired together, and worked together in food preparation and cleanup. In short, not only are they on their way to becoming a group, but a culture has begun to take shape, out of which they will operate, relate, and communicate. The "rules" for their functioning as they live life together will begin to emerge: what is polite, what is not; what is acceptable as humor, what is not; what is appropriate physical spacing, what is not; what elicits a positive, and a negative, reaction, etc. Twenty-four hours later team member eleven arrives. He or she notices that it is a 'moving train' onto which they have stepped. The other ten have bonded; they have become a group of sorts. And a culture has begun to form. There will be a time of adjustment, of fitting in, and transition as number eleven is melded into the group. That transition will impact and include all eleven present. The culture that had begun to emerge with the ten will now adjust to include the eleventh. The culture of the eleven will be different than that which was created by the ten. The point is that a culture which emerges, exists, and is established within a particular group will be unique to that grouping.

Another dimension of a group's culture is that it will influence or leave a significant impression on all those who operate within that culture. "Some leaders were able to create healthy cultures in the pursuit of their next level of success and soar personally, professionally, and organizationally. Those who did not focus on creating healthy cultures tolerated levels of what I call *cultural toxicity,* a situation that undermines the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of all involved."[11] Among the aspects of life within an organization, the operations, relationships, communication, function, character, and development of those who operate within that organizational culture will be shaped and dictated by that culture. The language, the pecking order, how power is gained and lost, what is safe and what is not will all become part of the culture. These, and the other cultural ingredients, will contribute mightily to how the organization functions.

Thus, in addition to determining the operations and tangible results of an organization, the culture will impact the behavior, approach, world view, growth, and development of the people within that culture. Hence, an organization accomplishes much more than what is manufactured or produced. The individuals who "produce the widgets" will themselves be touched on a deep level by the culture of the organization. It could be successfully argued that what is produced or accomplished by this group of people just might be of secondary importance. Rather, *who* is being produced, the people that make up the organization, might just be the primary accomplishment and product of that organization when all is said and done. "The very environment where one works can

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[11] Glaser, *Creating WE*, 7-8.

itself become a growth-enhancing force."[12] The culture of an organization is that pervasive and influential.

The purpose, the mission, and the vision of the group will be a significant contributor to the emerging culture, as well. "When the group first comes together, the most fundamental issue facing it as a whole is 'What are we really here for? What is our task?'"[13] Purpose, the chief end of the group, will be primary. If the group is part of a military community, for example, winning battles and wars is the chief end. It goes without saying that any other aim or objective is secondary to either defending your turf/ideologies or advancing your turf/ideologies. The culture that is developed and emerges in a military setting reflects and reinforces the values, priorities, and purpose of the military. The members of that organization will need to become a fighting unit that reacts instinctively to orders and chain of command. This will be a culture wherein absolute obedience, duty, honor and valor are supreme values.

If the group is part of a professional sports community, winning games is the chief end. Coaches lose jobs and players are either traded or cut when the wins don't come. The professional sports community is one in which the ideology "winning is not everything, it is the only thing" predominates. From the players on the field to the coaches to those in the team office, the emphasis is on winning. The zealous pursuit of that goal drives the organization and shapes the culture that emerges.

If the group being considered is a seminary, as is the case with GCTS/Jax, preparing men and women for ministry by providing evangelical, Bible-centered theological education and training is the measurable objective. Yet, as we shall see, for

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[12] William Lundin and Kathleen Lundin, *The Healing Manager: How to Build Quality Relationships & Productive Cultures at Work* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 1993), 19.

[13] Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 3d ed., 65.

all Christian organizations, ministries, and churches to *realize* their mission purpose, redemption will need to be at the center of their culture.

To summarize, the culture of an organization determines not only the functional operations and what will be produced by the organization. More importantly, the culture of an organization will determine *who* is produced by the organization - its people and its leaders. The organizational culture developed is as important as any decisions that are made and any strategies that are adopted. This leads naturally to the conclusion that the kind of culture that is established, or that emerges, is critical in determining what kinds of leaders are produced. In our present context, redemptive leaders are the desired outcome.

Redemptive Culture and Redemptive Organizations

We just established that the pervading culture of the organization is vital to the development of those within that particular group or organization, i.e.: the leaders produced by a culture will reflect the ingredients of that culture. In a Christian church, organization, or ministry, the bottom line mission and purpose must, by necessity, at least *include* redemption. In fact, it is not overstating the point to say that the redemption of both its constituents and those to whom it ministers *is* its purpose. If redemption is an important purpose and is to be sought after; if redemption is to be the hallmark of an organization; if redemption of people is part and partial of the great commission, then the culture of the contributing group or organization must include redemptive ingredients. It must be a redemptive culture. It follows from this that the values, priorities, beliefs, agreements, and assumptions of that organization's culture will need to be of a redemptive type and nature.

Redemption, as defined by the Encarta Dictionary: English (North America),[14] has various meanings: (1) "improving of something (the act of saving something or somebody from a declined, dilapidated, or corrupted state and restoring it, him, or her to a better condition); (2) a redeemed state (the improved state of somebody or something saved from apparently irreversible decline); (3) the atonement for human sin (deliverance from the sins of humanity by the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross); (4) buying back of something given."

The first two of these definitions are not applicable to the purposes of this thesis. Both are too pervasive and encompassing to be of use here. For instance, the definition "saving something or somebody from a declined, dilapidated, or corrupted state" could describe the efforts of the medical community or remodeling carpenters just as easily as a ministry. As applied against redemption as it is being defined here, these will not be of use to us. However, (3) "the atonement for human sin (deliverance from the sins of humanity by the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross); and (4) buying back of something given" both help to define redemption as it is being used in this paper.

Baker's Illustrated Bible Dictionary explains redemption as "the purchase back of something that had been lost, by the payment of a ransom. The idea running through all these (Biblical) texts....is that of *payment* made for our redemption. The debt against us is not viewed as simply cancelled, but is fully paid."[15] Christ saves us, and our redemption is procured, through the atoning work of the cross, which is payment in full for sin's curse. Mankind is thus ransomed, and in the process reconciled, to God. The definition and concept of redemption, as it will be used in this treatise, will include the

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[14] *Encarta Dictionary, English (North America).* Microsoft Word.
[15] M.G. Easton, *Baker's Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 592-593.

ransom of mankind through the atonement for sin through the activity of a loving, merciful, and gracious God toward a sinful mankind.

Redemption, including as it does the ingredient of ransom, is not something that is possible to achieve through the effort, will, and intentions of mankind. The extent of the depravity of mankind resulting from our sinfulness requires the efforts of another, someone outsides ourselves. The nature of sin is so pervasive (Rom 3:23 - ALL have sinned and fallen short of the beauty of God's plan); and its penalty so encompassing (Rom 6:23 - the wage that sins pays is death), that it renders sinful man incapable of either settling the score or paying the price for his/her own ransom. There is neither enough in the bank account to pay that hefty a price, nor of a value that would satisfy the ransom demand. "A person can never redeem himself; he cannot pay God the price for his life, because the payment for a human life is too great. What he could pay would never be enough to keep him from the grave, to let him live forever" (Ps 49:7-9). A life is called for. As a result of sin, someone must die. This consequence alone both disqualifies and makes unreasonable any man's attempt to pay the price for either his own life or that of someone else. Isaiah puts it thusly: "All of us have been sinful; even our best actions are filthy through and through" (Is 64:6).

Redemption is closely linked with salvation. Both are achieved only through the saving grace of Christ, through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Redemption will be more fully expounded and developed in chapter two. For present purposes, it is important to establish that redemption is at the heart of the gospel message; and as such, is a necessary and foundational part of the purpose and mission of any Christian church or ministry. By extension, the culture that is present within those same Christian

organizations and ministries must be a redemptive culture if redeemed people are to emerge from that culture and organization. As was stated above, the culture of an organization is *that* important.

While there are numerous contributors to the development of a redemptive culture, this project will focus on the importance of the system of communication, relationship, and function that is present.

Redemptive Culture and Systems

There are numerous factors that contribute to the establishment and evolution of an organization's culture. Although a complete listing would be too lengthy and impractical here, one of the most crucial of those, and the primary focus of this paper, is the type of *system* of communication, relationship and function that is present. Defining terms is in order.

The Encarta Dictionary defines a *system* as [bolding from original]– "**complex whole formed from related parts:** a combination of related parts organized into a complex whole; **set of principles:** a scheme of ideas or principles by which something is organized; **way of proceeding:** a method or set of procedures for achieving something; **group of related body parts:** a set of organs or structures in the body that have a common function." The nature of the coordination, inter-relation, achievement, and functioning of the parts of an organization will determine the system that will be present. There are two principle options for systems – they are defined as either *open* or *closed*.

The Encarta Dictionary defines *open* thusly [bolding from original] – "**not closed or locked:** allowing people or things to pass through freely; **allowing access inside:** with

the lid, cork, or other device removed or in a position that allows access to the inside; **frank and honest:** not trying to hide anything or deceive anyone; **receptive:** ready and willing to accept or listen to something such as new ideas or suggestions; **vulnerable:** in a position in which blame, criticism, or attack are likely; **freely accessible:** accessible to all, with no restrictions on entry, membership, or acceptance."

The Encarta Dictionary defines *closed* as [bolding from original] – "**not open for business:** describes a business or institution where work, operation, or trading has temporarily or permanently stopped; **denying access:** describes a place to which access is denied or through which passage is not permitted; **rigidly excluding others' ideas:** rejecting the ideas, beliefs, opinions, or influence of others; **not admitting outsiders:** allowing no outsiders in, or tending not to meet with outsiders; **confidential and private:** carried on or conducted in the strictest confidentiality or secrecy."

It is necessary at this point to interject into the discussion the issue of "degrees". There exist examples of pure, 100%, open and closed systems. However, these are confined to the natural world. For example, the concept of a completely 100% Open System is captured by the delta of a watershed. Water comes from multiple sources, and flows into and through the delta as it empties into a larger body of water. Few, if any, restrictions are present. This is abundantly evident during the spring, when the snow melts and rains proliferate. Unless restrained, unless some degree of closure or harnessing is introduced, the system allows for as much water as can be introduced. Flooding may result as the system expands to accommodate the increased volume. But the system is wide open.

The hydraulic brake system in a car, on the other hand, is an example of a completely 100% closed system. For the proper functioning of this system, a closed system is optimum and even required. It would be dangerous if it were otherwise. Pressure is a good thing for the effectiveness of this system. Introducing elements from the outside is *not* a good thing in this system. In fact, the introduction of anything from the outside, or the release of anything from the inside, would be harmful to this system and fatal to those using it.

A completely open or closed system can be an advantage when the system is dealing with the natural world and the world of inanimate objects. However, when humans are part of the system, neither a completely 100% open *nor* 100 % closed system is desirable. On the one hand, 100% openness would equate to permissiveness. Any and everything would be allowable. This would be a culture in which anything goes, leading to anarchy, chaos, and a lack of appropriate boundaries. On the other hand, 100% closedness would lead to indolence, restriction, and rebellion. The appropriate system, and the *degree* of openness or closedness, will be determined by the context. As opposed to a system of "things", where much is black and white, a system dealing with humans includes much grayness.

For example: the openness of parents with their children. Total, 100% openness would be inappropriate at certain times – fighting and resolving heated spousal disputes in front of the children, soliciting a toddler's view on nutrition and bed time, adults using progeny as peers, etc. Complete, 100% closedness would also be inappropriate at certain times – never allowing children to contribute toward making a decision regarding what to wear or their choice of friends; a "do as I say, not as I do" mentality, etc.

The point here is that when systems involve humans, there will be a degree of openness and/or closedness that will be called for and appropriate. What determines the degree? The context will decide and determine the appropriate degree of openness/closedness that should be present. Wisdom and maturity will be necessary. When the context is one that includes redemptive culture and redemptive leadership, the ingredients of an open system need to be present.

In his book "We Stand Together", Dr. Rod Cooper summarizes and delineates open versus closed systems.[16] The author is indebted to Dr. Rod Cooper, both for his work in this book, as well as for the ingredients of open and closed systems that were presented during the 2008 Doctor of Ministry residency. The following comparison is constructed by gleaning material from both sources.

One way to depict systems is to imagine a continuum, wherein on one end would be permissiveness, while at the other end of the line would be closed. When a system allows for any and everything to take place, where there are no boundaries, where it is excessively heterogeneous, the system would be a permissive system. On the other hand, when a system is restrictive to the extent that it makes no allowances for any outside input, is exclusive, and is excessively homogeneous, the system would be a closed system. When a system allows input, welcomes diversity, and seeks to grow and develop, however, the system would be described as an Open System.

For purposes of this thesis-project, we will focus on the open and closed systems. The following comparison of closed and open systems is offered as a way to define and capture the essence of each. This listing and comparison will be expanded upon and

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[16] Rod Cooper, *We Stand Together: Reconciling Men of Different Color* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 25-29.

further developed in chapter two. The intent here is to provide a quick sketch reference regarding the essence of each.

Table 1. A Comparison of Open and Closed Systems

CLOSED	**OPEN**
Exclusive or limited membership.	Inclusive and open membership.
A tense and fearful emotional atmosphere.	Comfortable, safe, and warm emotional atmosphere.
Rigid thoughts, beliefs, and values.	Thoughts, beliefs, and values are freely exchanged in an environment where flexibility and compromise are encouraged.
Resistance to change and growth.	Change and personal growth are valued and desired.
Conformity to rigid rules, values, and expectations.	Freedom to operate within the bounds of established protocols, guidelines, and expectations.
Interactions are guarded, predictable, and pursue a win/lose result.	Interactions are genuine, inspired, and seek a win/win result.
Decision making is hierarchical, where the loudest or strongest voice trumps the others.	Decision making is democratic and inclusive.
Roles are predetermined, stereotyped, and immutable.	Roles are flexible, dynamic, and emerging.
Relationships are role specific, based on conformity and winning approval.	Relationships are uplifting, affirming, and encourage one's uniqueness.
Indoctrination as regards how/what to think, believe, and feel.	Freedom of expression as regards thought, behavior, and feelings.
A narrow and prejudicial world view that limits and defines people not as uniquely created human beings but for utilitarian purposes, and regards them as different from "us".	A world view that is inclusive and delights in the differences.

When a system for use with humans takes on the nature of a closed system, work stops, access is denied, ideas/beliefs/opinions are rejected, outsiders are not allowed in, and decisions are carried on in secret. Closed systems, by their nature, exclude.

Closed systems are agenda, performance and outcome based. The system that is needed and necessary for developing, honoring, utilizing, and including *people* is the Open System. Edgar Schein puts it this way - "Organizations are open systems in constant interaction with their many environments. They consist of many subgroups, occupational units, hierarchical layers and geographically dispersed segments."[17] The closed system excludes; it reduces people to parts of the production machine. People become a means to agenda accomplishment. People are not utilized to the extent of their capacity, are not developed beyond their utilitarian benefit, and are not introduced to the redemptive opportunities and possibilities that are inherent in the outcomes of that system. When applied against the culture and the nature of ministry, in which redemption is foundational, a system that is open is advantageous to the redemptive development of leaders.

As was presented in the 2008 residency of the Redemptive Leadership and Organizational Development track of the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry degree, an Open System is crucial to and necessary for creating a redemptive culture.[18] Stated conversely, a redemptive culture would be impossible without the presence of an Open System of communication and relationship. It is not an overstatement to say that the system utilized determines the culture. An Open System is one that affirms and accepts people, encourages participation, invites exchange of ideas, rewards innovation, and welcomes diversity. An Open System promotes learning rather than indoctrination, provides a safe environment where people are valued, creates a setting of genuineness and trust, and is an atmosphere that provides the freedom to

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[17] Schein, *Organizational Culture & Leadership*, 7.
[18] Powers and Cooper, "Redemptive Leadership and Organizational Development", May 2008.

express and grow further into the unique person that God has constructed, and even willed, within each of us.

A redemptive culture is essential for developing redemptive leaders. We take on the qualities of the milieu in which we live and operate. Just as a chameleon changes its color to adapt to its surroundings, people take on the values and operating principles of the culture in which they live and grow. When that is redemptive, the opportunity exists for those in that culture to experience, appreciate, embrace, extract, and pursue redemption from the circumstances and situations of their life journey. When the culture is not redemptive, the opportunity to turn the lemons of life into lemonade is severely diminished. It is not impossible, but made much more difficult by having to navigate an additional set of speed bumps and pot holes created by the lack of an Open System and a redemptive culture.

The system established and created in Jacksonville would prove to be a major determinant to the culture that would exist. In turn, the culture created would play a significant role in determining both the academic experience and the development of the students as redemptive leaders. By using a retrospective study and analysis, it will be shown that the organizational culture of the Gordon-Conwell campus in Jacksonville demonstrates the characteristics of an Open System and redemptive culture.

Road Map – Where we are Headed From Here

In chapter two, Biblical and theological perspectives of an Open System will be explored and developed. The Trinity, Creation, the life and ministry of Jesus, the life and ministry of Paul, and the early church all demonstrate an Open System of communication, relationship, and function.

In chapter three, literature that speaks to and supports an Open System as a contributor to a redemptive culture will be reviewed and presented. Authors from both a secular and a Christian perspective will be included.

In chapter four, the project portion of the thesis-project will be presented. Using the case study method, a retrospective analysis will be conducted of the establishment of an Open System at GCTS/Jax. This will illustrate the ingredients of an Open System, how they are established and incorporated into an organizational culture, and show the importance and contribution that an Open System makes to a redemptive culture. The author will draw heavily from his own personal experience; and will conduct surveys and interviews with those involved at GCTS/Jax – students, the initial Exploratory Committee, it successor the Advisory Committee, donors, pastors, alumni of GCTS living in Florida and Georgia, and friends of the seminary.

In chapter five, the data and information presented in chapter four will be examined, with conclusions made and suggestions stated.

Anticipated Outcomes

This study and research will provide support for the thesis that an Open System is necessary for the establishment of a redemptive culture. The research will confirm and demonstrate that it is both possible and necessary to establish an Open System in a developing organization. *Possible* because it is what was accomplished and is what presently exists at GCTS/Jax. *Necessary* because an Open System is the system that needs to be present if a redemptive culture is to occur. I expect that this thesis-project

will confirm the presence of an Open System in Jacksonville, and that the lives and ministry of those involved are being impacted redemptively for the Kingdom of God.

Redemptive Leadership and the system that best enables it to occur, an Open System, find its roots, its basis, and its "raison d'etre" in the pages of scripture. Hence, we now turn our attention to the Bible for an apologetic for an Open System.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR OPEN SYSTEMS

Introduction

It is the premise of the author that an Open System reflects the heart and nature of

God. The direction of this chapter will demonstrate a pattern of an Open System from a

Biblical and theological perspective. This chapter will present two theological themes

(the Trinity and Creation), along with the Incarnation of Christ, the ministry approach of

Paul, and the example of the early church as demonstrations of an Open System. The

objective here is not to provide a comprehensive review of every passage from scripture

that provides an apologetic for an Open System. Rather, these are used to establish that

there is precedent for and evidence of an Open System from a Biblical and theological

vantage point.

As was done in the previous chapter, the initial focus will be on redemption.

Redemption and salvation, it can be argued, are *the* central themes and message of

scripture.

Redemption – the Message of the Bible

The Westminster Shorter Catechism begins with a question, "What is the chief

end of man?" The answer is succinct and direct - "The chief end of man is to glorify God

and to enjoy Him forever. "[1] Since the fall in the Garden of Eden, the issue for all of

mankind has been....*how can this be accomplished given what has happened*?

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[1] The Westminster Confession of Faith *(Atlanta: PCA Bookstore, 1990), II, 3.*

Fortunately, we have not been left to navigate those waters on our own. The essence of the Gospel message is captured in John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."[2]

The glorification and love of God were expressed at creation. Although we will delve more deeply into creation as a demonstration of an Open System in the section that follows, it needs to be stated here that the creation narrative of Genesis chapters 1-3 lays the foundation for the redemption story.[3] It is a story that is fraught with openness - the openness of a creator God, to the extent that He included the possibility that His creation might choose rebellion and disobedience rather than to trust in and obey Him; and His openness to express His continuing love by offering forgiveness and restoration.

God created all that is, has been, and will be (Gen 1:1). Creation was pleasing to God (Gen 1:4, 10, 12; 18; 25, 31). Mankind was created last in this procession, the crowning apex of His handiwork – "Then God said, 'Let us make human beings in our image, in our likeness.'" (Gen 1:26). However, the Fall of Man, described in Genesis 3, threw all of creation into chaos and anarchy. From that moment, all of creation was bent and broken, walking with a limp. The intended order was in disarray (Rom 3:23).

The result was disastrous for all of creation – eternal separation from the One who created and loves us; eternal separation from each other and the natural order; and eternal separation from ourselves. The relationship between God and His creation was breached

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[2] *The Holy Bible, New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984). This will be used for the biblical quotes throughout this manuscript, unless otherwise indicated.
[3] Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology, Volume One.* Abridged Edition. (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1988), 355.

by sin. Created for fellowship and relationship, all of creation was thrown into a tumultuous separation.[4]

But for the deep, deep love of the Triune God, creation would have continued in this pathetic state. The beautiful message of scripture is that the love of God for His creation was so great that He sent His only Son into what had become a cesspool to reconcile all of creation to Himself (John 3:16; Rom 8:1; II Cor 5:18-19). It is only through the shed blood of that same Son of God that mankind and the natural order can be redeemed to their creator (John 14:6; Rom 5:8-10). Salvation can be obtained by no other means than through the openness of God as expressed in the cross of Christ.

The redemption of the created order is what God's love seeks.[5] Salvation, principally having to do with rescue and recovery, and redemption, which as we shall see includes the notion of ransom and release, are intertwined and interwoven. The Biblical idea of salvation nowhere includes the "fire insurance" mentality that some would present it to be. Redemption involves more than "taking care of that sin thing", as one high school young man expressed it upon being confronted when opting to return to a carnal lifestyle several months after confessing Christ as Lord and Savior.

Redemption in the Old and New Testaments

Ga'al, padah, and kaphar are the Hebrew verbs meaning "to redeem". *Ga'al* is translated "to redeem, deliver, avenge, act as a kinsman"[6] This word was used when a

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[4] Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Volume 1- Genesis to Deuteronomy* (McLean: MacDonald Publishing Company), 31-33.

[5] Donald Grey Barnhouse, *God's Heirs: Romans 8:1-39; Expositions of Bible Doctrines Taking the Epistle to the Romans as a Point of Departure* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963), 129-130.

[6] W. E. Vine and others, *An Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1984), 317.

person sold himself or his property to another, and was then purchased or bought back by his next of kin. This action of recovering which was forfeited illustrates the idea of redemption, and the openness to that redemption. "The responsibility 'to redeem' belonged to the nearest relative - brother, uncle, uncle's son, or a blood relative from his family (Lev 25:25, 48, 49). The person (kinsman) who 'redeemed' the one in financial difficulties was known as a kinsman-redeemer, as the NIV translates the word in Ruth 2:20."[7]

Padah means "to redeem, ransom."[8] The most common connection is with the laws regarding the firstborn in Exodus and Numbers. To remind the Israelites of the Passover in Egypt, God pronounced His claim upon all firstborn Israelite males, both mankind and livestock. Cattle were used in sacrifices, "but all the firstborn of my children I redeem" (Ex 13:15). God satisfied this when, in Numbers 3:40ff, He appointed the tribe of Levi to liturgical service in lieu of firstborn Israelite males. "When God is the subject of *padah,* the word emphasizes His complete, sovereign freedom to liberate human beings."[9] "....in the Old Testament, it is never used except with regard to the redemption of persons or other living things."[10]

The third word, *kaphar,* means "to ransom, to make atonement, to cover, to expiate, to propitiate."[11] *Kaphar* is most directly connected with ritual sacrifices; hence, the idea of expiation and propitiation is suggested. "In any sacrifice, the action is directed both toward God (*propitiation*) and toward the offense (*expiation*). All the

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[7] Vine, *Expository Dictionary,* 318.
[8] Vine, *Expository Dictionary,* 318.
[9] Vine, *Expository Dictionary,* 319.
[10] *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 21.
[11] Vine, *Expository Dictionary,* 319.

sacrifices in the world would not satisfy God's righteousness (e.g., Micah 6:7; Ps 50:7-15). Hence God alone can provide an atonement or expiation for sin, by which His wrath is assuaged."[12]

In the NT, two Greek verbs (*exagorazo* and *lutroo*) are used for the word "redeem", while two nouns (*lutrosis* and *apolutrosis)* are used to convey the thought of redemption. *Exagorazo* is used to describe the price paid for the purchase of a slave (the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *ga'al).*[13] It is also used by Paul in Galatians 3:13, and 4:5, when speaking of the price that Christ paid on the cross to secure our deliverance from the Law and its curse. *Lutroo* is used to refer to the actual release obtained upon the presentation of a ransom.[14] "*Exagorazo* does not signify the actual redemption, but the price paid with a view to it, whereas *lutroo* signifies that actual deliverance, the setting at liberty."[15] *Lutrosis* is used in both the generalist sense of redemption (Israel - Luke 1:68; 2:38), and in the specific redemptive work of Christ on the cross bringing deliverance from sin (Heb 9:12).[16] *Apolutrosis* is akin to the verb *lutroo,* conveying the actual release, deliverance, and liberation from sin.[17]

Redemption, then, contains in its foundations the ingredients of openness as it provides for our ransom and release from the bondage and enslavement to sin. We are enslaved, in bondage. We are under the ownership, and in the insidious grip, of sin. Our condition is the result of our choices within our freedom to choose, which itself is a demonstration of the openness that God included in our creation, as will be developed

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[12]*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,* 21.

[13] Vine, *Expository Dictionary,* 935.

[14] Vine, *Expository Dictionary,* 935.

[15] Vine, *Expository Dictionary,* 935.

[16] Vine, *Expository Dictionary,* 935-936.

[17] Vine, *Expository Dictionary,* 936.

later in this chapter. Unfortunately, we use that choice and decision to follow the way of our sinful nature. We are under the curse of the Law, unable to wrest ourselves from it, even in those few moments when we would wish to. "We all lived like that in the past, and followed the impulses and imaginations of our evil nature, being in fact under the wrath of God by nature, like everyone else (Eph 2:3)."[18]

Praise God the passage in Ephesians 2 continues! "But even though we were dead in our sins God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, gave us life together with Christ - it is, remember, by grace and not by achievement that you are saved - and has lifted us right out of the old life to take our place with him in Christ Jesus in the Heavens (Eph 2:4-6)."[19]

Jesus Christ is our deliverer, the One who paid our ransom, the One who atoned for our sins, the One who paid the penalty for our decisions and choices. We are the one who earned the enslavement, the curse, the penalty. He, out of His love and grace, ransomed us by paying the penalty that we so richly deserve. He both ransomed us and secured our release from bondage.

Redeemed people are those who know Christ as *both* Savior and Lord. They are Mark 8:34 people – "deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow me."[20] They are Galatians 2:20 people – "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."[21]

It is the redeemed that the Lord uses in His reconciliation activity according to II Corinthians 5:18-20. As was delineated above, this is a process that includes salvation,

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[18] J.B. Phillips, *The New Testament in Modern English: For Schools* (London: Cox & Wyman Ltd, 1960).
[19] Phillips N.T.
[20] Phillips N.T.
[21] Phillips N.T.

deliverance, liberation, and freedom from the bondage of sin and its effects. The call on Christians is to continue in their salvation to become a disciple (Matt 28:20). Disciples are those who are on the journey to transformation and redemption (a life that is forever changed by the events and circumstances that comes its way). Those who are transformed are, in turn, those who can experience redemption (aware of and embracing the result of God's activity in their lives) in such a way that they are in a position to offer redemptive opportunities to others.

The Bible makes it clear that the Gospel is inclusive, for everyone (Matt 11:28-30). God wills that none would perish (II Peter 3:9). Christ makes it clear that He lives on in the hearts and souls of his followers through the person and presence of the Holy Spirit (Rev 3:20; John 16:13). The visible presence of Christ in the world is his redeemed people, the Body (Eph 4:3-6). That Body is called to unity and oneness, to be the community of faith, working out their communication, relationship, and function as one.

While an Open System is neither synonymous nor equated with redemption, the conclusion of the author is that the ingredients that constitute an Open System are evident in the redemptive process. One of the possibilities within the redemption process is the opening of closed systems that exist as a result of sin. An Open System is suggested in the redemption story, to which we now turn our attention.

The Godhead (Trinity) and the Open System

The word *Trinity* is not found in Scripture. However, the Old and New Testaments are replete with references and inferences to the reality and presence of the

Christian God existing as a *Triune* God.[22] Karl Barth established the doctrine of the

Trinity as foundational and fundamental to all Christian doctrine - "It is the doctrine of

the Trinity which fundamentally distinguishes the Christian doctrine of God as Christian,

as well as the Christian concept of revelation, from all other possible doctrines of God

and concepts of revelation."[23] Lewis Sperry Chafer stated that, "In orthodox Christianity

it is generally agreed that God subsists as a Trinity of three Persons – the Father, the Son,

and the Holy Spirit."[24] While the intent here is not to regurgitate what the great

theologians of the Faith have already established, they serve as a backdrop to this section,

in which it will be shown that the Trinity, both in essence and in function, model an Open

System of communication, relationship, and function.

There are several assumptions that need to be made, which will serve as a

foundation from which to develop subsequent points:

1. Apart from God Himself, no one has a full and final handle on how to explain
    the Trinity. Theologians do their best with finite minds to capture and
    articulate the infinite.

2. That being said, the Scriptures teach that God is monotheistic. "The Bible
    supports the concept of monotheism – that God is one..."[25]

3. God is one essential Being, and yet composed of three Persons. "The one
    divine Being subsists in three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit."[26] The
    conclusion from this is that these three Persons "are not three individuals

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[22] Gal. 3:14; 4:4-6; Eph. 3:14-17 for example.

[23] Otto Weber, *Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics: An Introductory Report on Volume's I:1 to II:4* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953), 33.

[24] Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 179.

[25] Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 182.

[26] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology: Volume I* (Grand Rapids: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952), 444.

alongside of, and separate from, one another, but only personal self-distinctions within the Divine essence, which is not only generically, but also numerically, one."[27]

4. Any distinction within the Three is not of substance or essence, but of role or function. "All members of the Trinity are equal in *essence*, but they do not have the same *roles*."[28] Some would substitute synonyms for 'roles' ("modes of existence" – Barth; "subsistence and operation" – Hodge; "attributes, properties, and subsistences" – Chafer), but the meaning remains the same.

Unity of the Trinity

It is stated in Deuteronomy 6:4 (and other Scriptures with the same message) that the Lord God is One. This refers to quantity or number, obviously; yet, also to unity. Among the definitions of "unity" in the Encarta Dictionary are these [bolding from original]: **"combination into one, something whole, harmony,** and **singleness among individuals**."[29] Unity equates to oneness. "The Scriptures affirm God's absolute unity from beginning to the very end. 'In the beginning God [not gods] created the heavens and the earth' (Gen 1:1)....The term 'God' itself is plural in form; God sometimes speaks in the plural ('we' or 'us' – cf. Gen 1:26), and even the word for 'one' in Hebrew (echad) can mean 'many'."[30]

The significance of unity in the Trinity for our purposes is that of consistency of purpose and operation, oneness of mission and function, "global" awareness within their

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[27] L Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), 87.
[28] Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology: Volume 2* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 2003), 290.
[29] Encarta Dictionary: English (North America). Microsoft Word.
[30] Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 269, 277.

essence and roles, and the lack of division. "It goes without saying that, when we speak of the Trinity of God, we refer to a trinity in unity, and to a unity that is trinal."[31] This suggests the following as regards openness:

The unity and oneness of the Trinity suggest equality. Deuteronomy 6:4, Malachi 2:10, John 14:9-11, I Corinthians 8:6, Galatians 3:20, I Timothy 2:5 and Mark 12:32 all testify to the oneness and equality of God. In the Trinity there is no hierarchy, no "pecking order". "Attributes being inseparable from substance, the Scriptures, in saying that the Father, Son, and Spirit possess the same attributes, say they are the same in substance; and, if the same in substance, they are equal in power and glory."[32]

It is nigh unto impossible for Man to conceive of equality - the lack of position, power, influence, or control - when one or more are gathered. Try though we may, we have no experiences to draw upon. Our sin prevents it. Not so with the Trinity. Although their roles vary, the variance has no bearing on either the carrying out or the genesis of those roles. "It is a heresy (called subordinationism) to affirm that there is an *ontological subordination* of one member of the Trinity to another, since they are identical in essence; nonetheless, it is clear that there is a *functional subordination*; that is, not only does each member have a different function or role, but some functions are also subordinate to others."[33]

When we conceptualize this, there is a blurring of the lines between collective and respective individual role activity. Where there is *no* blurring is as regards intent, focus, derivation, essence, meaning, occupation, and function of the roles.

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[31] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology,* 84.
[32] Hodge, *Systematic Theology,* 444.
[33] Geisler, *Systematic Theology,* 290.

This equality dimension of the unity and oneness of the Godhead demonstrates the presence of openness and collaboration; humility and servant hood that serves the common cause; an interconnectedness of will, heart, purpose, function, and role; and an agape love that is selfless and pursues the whole. There is a marked absence of territoriality and jockeying for personal position; of power and control issues; of ego and pride; or inferiority or superiority of attitude, approach, or existence. We must not confuse our world and the way we function, even in the best of Christian endeavors, with the environment of the Trinity.

The unity and oneness of the Trinity suggest unanimity. The Divine essence is neither submerged nor diluted by the Three who construct It. "…the divine essence is not divided among the three persons, but is wholly with all its perfection in each one of the persons, so that they have a numerical unity of essence. The divine nature is distinguished from the human nature in that it can subsist *wholly* and *indivisibly* in more than one person."[34] The Three exist with, for, and in each other. Whatever is completed by one is accomplished by all.

The works of the Three "are never works of one person exclusively, but always works of the Divine Being as a whole."[35] While some works are ascribed more particularly to one, and then to another, in the economy and relationship of the Trinity neither the act itself nor the accomplishment of it, nor the object of the effort, are directed to anything other than the One. "…each Person of the Trinity is essential to God, and the other Persons of the Trinity are an incomplete definition of what God is."[36]

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[34] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology,* 88.
[35] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology,* 89.
[36] Chafer, *Systematic Theology,* 183.

The amazing result for Man is this - out of the love of the Triune God for both the Trinity and for Mankind, we are invited to be recipients and partakers of the divine activity and accomplishment. What an example and suggestion of redemptive leadership and an Open System. "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (II Cor 13:14). Indeed! The Trinity models an Open System that involves, includes, collaborates, and invites. It means being on the same page, pulling in the same direction, being in each other's corner, cheering each other on.

The unity and oneness of the Trinity suggest concert, coordination, and cooperation. "Each important work of God is separately ascribed to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. This indicates that they individually wrought these works though obviously the works of the Trinity contribute to the whole of creation. The thought is not so much that They acted as partners as that They acted individually in completing what They undertook to do."[37] Continuing this thought, Chafer goes on to say, "Though dependant on the Spirit in some cases, it is also clear that in other cases He [Christ] accomplished miracles by virtue of His power as the second Person of the Trinity; and it is not supportable that everything He did was by the power of the Spirit though everything He did was in keeping with the will of the Spirit."[38] Genesis 1:26, Genesis 11:7, Galatians 4:4-6, John 14:26, John 15:26, John 16:7, I Corinthians 12:4-6, Galatians 3:14, and I Peter 1:2 all speak to the concerted effort, coordination and cooperation that flow from Their unity and oneness.

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[37] Chafer, *Systematic Theology,* 192.
[38] Chafer, *Systematic Theology,* 241.

Mankind *talks* about "all for one, one for all". The Godhead *walks* "all for one, one for all". The Trinity not only *is* One essential Being composed of three Persons, the Trinity also functions and exists as One, although composed of three Persons. The system modeled is an Open System, one that functions with unity, collaboration, and inclusion. Redemptive Leadership and an Open System of communication, relationship, and function are clearly demonstrated by the Trinity.

Creation and the Open System

The act of creation was a natural extension of the unity, community, and openness of the Trinity. In Genesis 1:1-25, God creates paradise out of nothing. The emphasis throughout the passage is "and God said". It is clear from scripture that God created the whole universe through and for Jesus (John 1:3, 10; Colossians1:16; Hebrews 1:2). Into nothingness the words of God were spoken, and paradise resulted. It was a creation that was not intended for *Him*. The Trinity, as was mentioned above, was complete without any outside participation or contribution. Creation was an expression of God, for the benefit and advantage of His creation.

On the first day, light and its two components, night and day, were made (Gen 1:3-5). God didn't create light because *He* needed to see (light and dark are the same to Him according to Ps 139:12). He created light for *our* benefit; "….that by it [the light] we might see his works and his glory in them"[39]. The light was for us.

This pattern, the Word being spoken which led to something from nothing, was repeated daily. As one day led into the next, a palace was being constructed. On the second and fourth day the Earth, sky, sea, sun, moon, and stars – order and symmetry,

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[39] Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible,* 4.

beauty and magnificence – were established (Gen 1:6-8; 14-19). On the third, the plant kingdom came into being: timber, fruit, vegetables, spices, and a lush arboretum (Gen 1:9-13). On the fifth, water and air creatures were created (Gen 1:20-23). On the sixth day, the animal kingdom and Man himself were created (Gen 1:24-31).

God was providing a habitat and system that was intended to accommodate us. A palace was being crafted for our benefit and pleasure. We were being welcomed and included in His creation, to partake of and venture forth into the playground that He was preparing for us.[40] This was the landlord stocking the larder for the tenant. It was the King showing hospitality to the wait staff. As much as creation was an expression of the grace, creativity, and genius of the Trinity, it was a demonstration of His openness and intent to include, involve, and incorporate us. As great a miracle as the act of creation was, perhaps the most glorious aspect of creation and the greatest miracle of all was that God was opening Himself up to his servants. This was the father hiking up his robe, throwing caution, reputation, and image to the wind, and sprinting to welcome home the lost son (Luke 15:11-32). It was a demonstration and commitment to hospitality that both baffles and amazes. The Trinity was putting out the welcome mat.

God's Open Approach

The crowning glory and the zenith of God's creation was Man (Gen 1:26-27; 2:7-9, 15-25). The creation of Man demonstrated numerous dimensions of God's open approach and system.

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[40] C.F. Keil and R. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes, Volume 1 The Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), 67.

The openness of creation positioned Mankind to commune and have fellowship with God. "It is apparent that in creating Adam and Eve God gave them knowledge, language, and capacity to reason. In their state of innocence they were free from all sin and were able to commune with God without hindrance."[41] Chafer goes on to say that believers today have that same joy and privilege. We are able to walk with Him and talk with Him; enjoy his guidance and instruction; and journey through life under His power to accomplish His will and way.[42] Adam (and Eve) enjoyed unbroken fellowship, uninterrupted relationship, and unhindered communion with Him. Open access and right of entry.

The openness of creation positioned Mankind to commune and have fellowship with each other as Community. "Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, in our likeness....; So God created human beings in his own image, in the image of God he created them..." (Gen 1:26-27). The picture suggested here is of a Holy Council that is consulting and collaborating in collegiality with One Another to create Man. The image of an Open System.

The Trinity was a Community of love and fellowship, a level of which is ungraspable to the human mind. However, we get a glimpse of this in the Garden, for the Trinity was reflected in this dimension of community. "Since man is created in the image of God, we learn to understand something of the personal life of God from the contemplation of personality as we know it in man."[43] Just as the Trinity was a Community of three, so too was the creation of Mankind a Community of three: Adam, Eve, and the Trinity (as one essential Being). "In the Garden of Eden Adam lived in

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[41] Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 339.
[42] Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 352.
[43] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 84.

unbroken fellowship with God and received daily counsel and direction from God."[44] It is fair to extend this to Eve, as well, before the fall. Our ancient parents experienced a relationship with God that contained some of the rich relationship of the Trinity – an environment of openness; of complete harmony, cooperation, and communion together. This was indeed unbroken fellowship, uninterrupted relationship, and unhindered communion. This, then, is at least one aspect of what it means to be created in the image, in the likeness of God.

The Lord God went on to also say of the creation of Man, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Gen 1:26-27; 2:18). Even with the advantage of divine companionship, with a community shaped from a Trinitarian mold, for man to function as God had intended, humanity needed and was provided the companionship of fellow humans. This thought is amplified in Ecclesiastes 4:9-12: "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If they fall down, they can help each other up. But pity those who fall and have no one to help them up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." "It is a pleasure to him [Adam] to exchange knowledge and affection with those of his own kind, to inform and to be informed, to love and to be beloved…..In our best state in this world we have need of one another's help; for we are members one of another, and *the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee*" 1 Corinthians 12:21.[45] We were created in and for Community.

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[44] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 351.
[45] Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 18.

Adam and Eve were of one flesh. Eve was created neither out of Adam's head (which would have suggested that he rule or lord over her), nor out of his feet (proposing that she be trampled or domineered by him). Rather, Eve was constructed out of Adam's *side*. The implication is that they were to be equals, existing in a complimentary and cooperative relationship.[46] This system of exchange, reciprocity, and of relationship models and reinforces the evidences of an Open System as presented in Table 1 in chapter one.

The openness of creation imbued Man with the freedom and power to decide and choose. From among the buffet of options and opportunities that He both allows and causes, we have the authority to make choices.[47] Along with this came the capacity to reason. The cornerstone of the concept of choice, of a free will, and of the ability to reason is God's openness to include and involve us in His creation. We have been blessed by the Creator with the power and authority to make decisions, to make choices - to do whatever we want, whenever we want to do it (within the limitations of time, space, giftedness, and opportunity). Any and every decision is possible within our prerogative. Be that on the permissive, the open, or the closed end of the system spectrum. We are a free, thinking, choosing, deciding, and reasoning agent. With all the rights and privileges, as well as the consequences, of those choices.

All that was created prior to Man was made obedient, with no choice to do otherwise. Trees are always trees, rocks are always rocks, and birds are always birds. They are what they are created to be. They live according to their design and instinct and never stray from it. Only Man was created "in our image, in our likeness" (Gen. 1:26).

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[46] Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 20.
[47] Bruce K Waltke with Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 87.

This was not said of inanimate things or the animal kingdom. Although "scripture reveals that God purposes to secure a company of beings for His eternal glory who choose good rather than evil"[48], only Man has the capacity to choose to become something other than what we are created to be.

In addition to all this, we were created second only to God over matters of stewardship and governance. "God blessed them [Adam and Eve] and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds of the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground....The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Gen 1:28; 2:15). God thus welcomed Man into his authority and dominion. In so doing, He extended to us responsibility. We are to be stewards, caretakers, managers of the Father's affairs on this orb. God trusted paradise, creation, and ultimately His Son to mankind. Trust, confidence, and mutual dependence were present, and part of the construct and concept of openness as described in chapter one.

The openness of creation allowed for the possibility of disaster and catastrophe. Openness is a door that swings both ways. We are free to choose God and His way, and free not to. We have been given the option. The door is open. It is an Open System - we are participants and are imbued with the authority to make choices and decisions. God's will, God's way, and God's love are *that* open. The reality is that God's openness allowed for the possibility that paradise could become a land fill. Love allows for choice. "Though it is impossible for mankind to understand fully why a holy God would permit sin, it is evident that God's purposes required this permission."[49] "In the permissive will

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[48] Chafer, *Systematic Theology,* 361.
[49] Chafer, *Systematic Theology,* 363.

of God, angels and human beings were allowed to sin."[50] Choice is a natural outcome of openness, in the sense that openness allows for outcomes outside those preferred or desired by the Creator. The possibilities emanating from choice were endless. It was a coin with two sides; and, regrettably, we spend from both.

Not only is there open access *by* us, there is open access *to* us; by both God and Satan (Gen 3:1-5). As established in chapter one (p.15-18), a closed system does not allow access from the outside; it is closed. As was also established in chapter one, an Open System allows access from without; it is receptive and freely accessible to outside interference and forces. Satan approached Eve while she was alone, out of proximity to Adam (Gen 3:1-5). It would be pure conjecture to muse what the outcome might have been had Adam been with her. However, it is not speculative to conclude that we are in a vulnerable condition when out of community, with either God or our fellow Man.

A cruel irony of openness is that when it is pursued outside the creator's intent, when it leads away from the intended order, it becomes closed-ness. The eyes of Adam and Eve were opened, and what they saw was not pleasant. What they had done and accomplished was folly. They had mined fool's gold. "He (Satan) told our first parents, when he tempted them that their eyes should be opened; and so they were, but not as they understood it; they were opened to their shame and grief, not to their honor nor advantage."[51] Just as when there is too little openness present (a closed system), too much of a good thing can become destructive (a permissive system). Too much openness can be unhealthy for us. The openness demonstrated by Satan led Eve away from the Lord and from Adam, whereas, God's openness leads to redemption; and brings health,

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[50] Chafer, *Systematic Theology,* 365.
[51] Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible,* 26.

protection, safety, and security. Discernment is necessary on our part: does this present degree of openness lead *to* the Lord or *away from* the Lord; and does it lead *to* redemptive relationships or *away from* redemptive relationships with others?

The openness of creation included consequences and accountability. We *can* choose; but our choices do not determine the full result or outcome (see Ps 127:1-2; Proverbs 16:1; 16:9; 19:21; 21:31). Further, while we are free to choose, we are not free from the consequences of our choices and actions. "And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will certainly die" (Gen 3:16-17). The tragedy lived out by Mankind is that we all exercise our free will, choice, and reason to its full and capricious extent. As tragic as this is, the outcome or result of that choice is direr still - "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23). Hence, our choices do not guarantee that our wishes come true. Nor do they result in what He would desire for us - "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). The Lord desires that no one would ever stray. But stray and perish we do, as a result of the exercise of our freedom and choice.

The openness of creation provided restoration. After the fall in Genesis 3, God sought Adam and Eve in the Garden. "Where are you?", he asked (Gen 3:9). God came seeking fallen Man. God was openly seeking Man, even in the midst of Man's sin and shame. God came to confront and to redeem. Restoration of the created order was the redemptive purpose. God took the first step. God initiated. Both in the Garden, and in

the incarnation of His Son, Jesus Christ. "Man was injured by the fall to the extent that only the redeeming grace of God can rescue him."[52]

God's action here is reminiscent of Christ's words in Luke regarding his mission and purpose: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (19:10). The opposite was never an option for a loving and open God. For God to have "taken his ball and go home", to have closed off Himself and His love from a bent and broken world would have been fully inconsistent and contrary to His nature.[53] Hence, "though human failure is inevitable, God has provided for restoration, 'if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness'" (I John 1:9).[54] God is open to, and openly pursues, the salvation, redemption, and restoration of a lost world.

As has been mentioned on numerous occasions thus far in chapters one and two, the dark side of an Open System is permissiveness. But even *that* can be used for redemptive purposes by the Redeemer. The Lord exists in the storm (Ex 20:21; Ps 104:3-4; Is 29:6; Daniel 3:25; Nahum 1:3; Matt 28:20). This is the paradox of the reconciling, redeeming message of the gospel. It is Joseph saying to his brothers in Genesis 50:20, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." Those who are living into the redemption of Christ are those who interpret all of life through redemptive spectacles. They can rejoice that indeed ALL things really *do* work together for good to them that love God and are the called according to his purpose (Rom 8:28).

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[52] Chafer, *Systematic Theology,* 340.

[53] Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology,* Volume 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 292.

[54] Chafer, *Systematic Theology,* 396.

Genesis 3:14-24 spells out the consequences of the fall for Satan, Eve, and Adam. Adam and Eve were not "kicked to the curb". God did not eliminate them, nor send them to a different planet. They were reconciled to the loving Father. Mercy was offered (food, work, rest, death to shorten the travail and pain); pleasure was included with the pain (child birth); cooperative relationship was offered (marriage); they were clothed; woman was now ironically named Eve ("living"); they were neither cursed nor disinherited; they were sent to place of toil, not of torment.[55] God's love and openness were on display, as they were in Luke 15:11-33 when the father humbled himself to run and greet the returning prodigal.

The Life of Jesus and the Open System

Redemption is fleshed out and demonstrated in the second Person of the Trinity, Jesus the Son. Jesus' life and ministry proceeded from the Father, and set the stage for the sending of the Spirit. The principle basis for His presence on earth was that of Redeemer, bringing reconciliation and redemption to a lost Mankind. Based on the author's study, it is his opinion that an Open System best accomplishes this work of redemption, and that an Open Systems was demonstrated throughout Jesus' life and ministry.

"The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood" (John 1:14, The Message[56]). "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity;…he had to be made like his brothers and sisters in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might

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[55] Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 35.
[56] Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The New Testament in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1993).

make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (Heb 1:14; 17-18). He openly, obediently, and willingly left the sanctuary of Heaven to enter into time and space as one of us. As has been established thus far, the way of a closed system is to protect turf, limit access, control the process, and maintain distance. That is clearly *not* the way of Jesus.

Jesus as Presented in Philippians

In Philippians 2:5-11, Paul expounds on the incarnation, most specifically Jesus' attitude and approach. However, 2:5-11 is not only preceded by 2:1-4; it proceeds *from* it:

> If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility value others better than yourselves. Each of you should not look only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. (2:1-4)

Paul's focus in these four verses is on unity in the Body of Christ. Paul uses words and phrasing that suggests unity, oneness, harmony, being on the same page with, pulling in the same direction, and being of one accord: "United" with Christ, "comfort" from His love, "fellowship" in the Spirit, being "like-minded", having the "same love", being "one in spirit and purpose". These are similar to what was presented above as regards the Trinity and the created order. Redemption and an Open System include, involve, and lead toward unity and oneness.[57]

Paul's admonition is that the Philippians work toward a common purpose or common cause, not that they become carbon copies or clones of one another. "The

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[57] Geisler, *Systematic Theology,* 677-678.

emphasis is thus on the Philippians' unity of purpose and disposition, unity with regard to the gospel and their heavenly citizenship – exactly as in 4:2, where he qualifies it, 'have the same mindset *in the Lord*' – *not* on their all having the same opinions about everything."[58] Paul's concept of unity is not that they become "yes men" for each other. He is not suggesting that they become rubber stamps. That would require both falsehood and abdication of personal responsibility. That would be the product of a closed system, where status quo and the preservation of the system are protected and defended above all else. The reality of life in the Body is that we *will* see things from varying perspectives and priorities; we won't always see eye to eye. However, remaining one in the midst of our differences is what it means to be the Body. The issue before the house, then and now, is *what we do with* and *how we handle* our disagreements and God inspired thoughts.

Redemptive unity and oneness is an affair of the heart, soul, mind, and strength. It involves our entire being as individuals, and involves the entire Body collectively. Redemption occurs when men and women give themselves to the Lord to such a degree that agape love, the kind of love that is selfless and other serving, is what governs thought, word, and deed. "Our preoccupation will not be with ourselves but with those about us (2:3), since Christ frees us from being the center of our own lives."[59] When and where redemption is taking place, one will find a system that is open. An Open System invites individuals to the table; and in so doing, encourages them to bring their heart, soul, mind, and strength. As was established in chapter one, an Open System affirms

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[58] Gordon D. Fee, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: William. B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 185.

[59] Don Williams, *Rejoice! An Introduction to Inductive Bible Study and Commentary on Philippians* (Hollywood: Author, 1974), 57.

people -- who and what they are, who and what they are becoming as unique individuals. "Their common sharing in the Spirit ought to be a decisive factor in their corporate life as 'one body in Christ' (Rom 12:5). This doctrine should sound the death-knell to all factiousness and party spirit, for as there is 'one spirit' by whom they were all baptized into one body (I Cor 12:13) and one Spirit in whom they all share by virtue of that incorporation into Christ and in their access to the Father (Eph 2:18), so there can be only 'one body' (Eph 4:4) in which all are members."[60] A redemptive, Open System seeks to build a redemptive community and culture, that in turn achieves unity and oneness

Managing disagreements, welcoming opposing worldviews, and including those who perceive things differently is a choice; as is seeking to have a common mindset or attitude with those with whom we differ and, in some cases, prefer would cease and desist. Choosing this road, both for ourselves and for the others with whom God has put us, is based on whose are we, to whom we belong.

In Galatians 6:2, Paul instructs us to "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." The emphasis in this verse is on the two words 'each' and 'others'. The tension between the individual and the Community is pronounced. It is only as the people of God exist and operate as individuals together in Community that they fulfill His divine and redemptive purposes for them. The Community is an emphasis that is found throughout Paul's writings in the New Testament. However, for that emphasis to occur, obedience must begin with the individuals within that Community.[61] In Philippians 2:3-4, Paul confirms this when he states, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather in humility value others above yourselves, not looking

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[60] Ralph P. Martin, *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians -- An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), 91.
[61] Fee, *New International Commentary on the New Testament,* 190.

to your own interests but each of you to the interest of the others." "If 'selfish ambition and vain glory' are sure bets to erode relationships within the church, then the surest safeguard to a healthy church is when 'considering each other as more important than oneself' characterizes its people, especially those in positions of leadership."[62] A redemptive culture is one in which the values, the priorities, and the agenda of God are paramount. Paul seems to suggest that the oneness of the Community is part and parcel to God's values, priorities, and agenda. Thereby, the Community and the rights of individuals are a dual objective and are held in tender balance. This delicate balance is neither a common nor embraced ideology in western culture in 2011; but one that Paul is convinced is God's way. Paul goes on to illustrate this by the life of Christ in Philippians 2:5-11:

> Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. But made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

What Paul has established in verses 1-4 and goes on to say in verses 5-11, is grounded and founded in Jesus at His incarnation. He has an attitude that we are to emulate as we deal with each other in the redemptive community. Here Paul presents three positions taken by Christ: He did not cling to His prerogatives as God's equal (J.B. Phillips); He made Himself nothing; He humbled Himself by becoming obedient.

Christ Jesus, Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped (Phil 2:6 – author's *italics*). Paul could appeal to the Philippians

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[62] Fee, *New International Commentary on the New Testament,* 189.

in 2:2 to have a common attitude (like-minded), a common affection (same love), and a common purpose (of one mind) because that was the very same approach that Jesus demonstrated at His incarnation. "The Son was free from his own rights, his own self-exertion, so that he was willing to die the death of a criminal..."[63] Jesus, in turn, bids us to do the same - to come and die (Matt 10:38-39; Mark 8:34-35). Die to self and to selfish ambition. Die to the insistence on having it our way, on our terms, in our time. Die to closing others off in a quest for accomplishment or success. As was posited in the comparison of open and closed systems in chapter one, a closed system is a system based on protection, fear, and/or pride. It is a system that excludes outside elements that are perceived to be a danger or threat to the "success" of the mission. An Open System is one that welcomes participation in an environment or culture that seeks a common attitude, affection, and purpose. This type of system is only possible to the degree that the members are not looking to their own interests or needs but instead are looking to the interests of those around them. And to those of Him who resides above.

....*but made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness* (Phil. 2:7 – author's *italics*). Jesus emptied Himself of all but love. Then stripped Himself of every advantage by becoming a servant (literally "a slave"), a human being. "In 'pouring himself out' and 'humbling himself to death on a cross,' Christ Jesus has revealed the character of God himself. Here is the epitome of God-likeness: the pre-existent Christ was not a 'grasping, selfish' being, but one whose love for others found its consummate expression in 'pouring himself out,' in taking on the role of a slave, in humbling himself to the point of death on behalf of those so loved. No wonder Paul cannot abide triumphalism – in any of its forms. It goes against everything that God is

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[63] Williams, *Rejoice,* 57.

and that God is about."[64] Self sacrifice is the way of Christ. Those who would choose

Christ, who choose to live as a redeemed one, must choose self-sacrifice. There is no

other option, no "door #2" to choose from. Is there any doubt that a closed system, being

by nature self protective and self-serving, is the antithesis of what Paul is suggesting and

what Jesus demonstrated? Redemption, and its compliment Open System, are suggested

by what Jesus accomplished at His incarnation.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became

obedient to death – even death on a cross (Phil 2:8 – author's *italics*). In Joshua 1:7-8,

success is defined far differently than in the world in 2011. *Obedience to God*, to His

will and way, is defined as success. This is reasonable and in accord with God's nature –

He determines results (see page 43 above). The outcomes of our efforts are in *His*

sovereign hands. Hence, our role, call, and responsibility are to obey. When He is

embraced, and when His way is chosen - i.e., obedience, - it becomes possible to value

others above oneself. In Christ, it becomes feasible that the redeemed look to the

interests of others rather than to their own. In Christ, it becomes possible to enact and

proceed out of a system that seeks to elevate the redemption of the collective effort and

the individuals involved in that effort. In Christ it becomes possible to hold the

Community and the individuals within that Community in a delicate balance of

collegiality and collaboration, and of equality and harmony.

The end result? "God exalted him [Jesus] to the highest place and gave him a

name that is above every name" (Phil 2:9). It is hearing the Father say, "Well done, good

and faithful servant" (Matt 25:21). It is glorifying God and enjoying Him forever.[65]

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[64] Fee, *New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 197.
[65] The Westminster Confession of Faith, *II, 3*.

Living out of and into redemption, Jesus came in a way that modeled and demonstrated an Open System.

The Apostle Paul and the Open System

It is the belief of the author that the Apostle Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, lived out and embodied an Open System in his life and ministry. Because His way was the way of Christ; his stated intent was to live for Christ (Phil 1:21). The life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ were what consumed this Apostle. The Redeemer was his message, as well as his method. Hear his words to the church located in Thessalonica (I Thess 1:5-6; 2:7-8, 11-12):

> ....our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord...but we were gentle among you, like mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our very lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

This describes one who is tender, who is gentle, who is personally invested, and who is committed to their personal as well as to their spiritual lives. This describes an approach and a way of ministry leadership that is involved, "down on their level", in the trenches with them. Paul entered into their lives, with the agenda being to love as Christ loved and minister as Christ ministered. In a manner similar to Christ laying down His life for the unworthy, Paul gave of himself, his time, his energy, and his person. Paul demonstrated the incarnational style and approach that Jesus exemplified.

Philippians as an Example of Paul's Approach

The Letter to the Philippians provides a window into the approach, style, and system from which Paul functioned. Throughout the four chapters of this letter, Paul is depicted as one who knew the troops and was known by them. There was a connective engagement between Paul and the Philippians that suggests his approach was consistent with what we have thus far seen of an Open System. For example:

The word "brother" or "brothers" is used eight times (1:12; 1:14; 2:12; 3:1; 3:12; 3:13; 3:17; 4:1; 4:21). There was a familial feel and relationship between Paul and the Philippians.

He uses words of endearment in referring to them:

- 1:3 – I thank my God every time I remember you.
- 1:4 – In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy;
- 1:7 – It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart;
- 1:8 – God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.
- 2:12 – Therefore, my dear friends…
- 2:19-22 – Timothy is like a son to Paul.
- 4:1 – Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for…

The relationship between Paul and the church in Philippi was one that oozed mutual warmth and affection.[66] It is obvious from the language used by Paul that their bond was not a "working relationship" but a personal one, which involved their very lives and persons. They had become a team and Paul's desire is for them to work together as a unified whole, as one. The culture that was created was a Community; and within that Community was an abiding and endearing sense of love, respect, and loyalty for each

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[66] Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 43: Philippians.* Rev. ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc, 2004), lvi.

other.[67] These qualities do not emerge from a close system, where protectionism, "guarding the secrets", exclusion, and control are the hallmarks. These qualities emerge through an Open System in which redemption is that which is desired.

They were partners, "in it together"; further, theirs was a reciprocal relationship:[68]

- 1:5 – …because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now…
- 1:7 – It is right for me to feel this way about all of you…..all of you share in God's grace with me.
- 1:19 – ….through your prayers…
- 1:25 – I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith...
- 2:25 – But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs.
- 3:17 – Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.
- 4:3 – Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended by my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers…
- 4:10, 14, 15, 16 – I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. ...not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; …you sent me aid again and again when I was in need.

The relationship between Paul and the Philippians was one in which mutual accountability, dependency, and participation was present.[69] They were committed to their continued growth in Christ, and partook in that journey together. Paul was clearly their father in the faith, but he had welcomed and included them to the extent that he regarded them as co-workers, fellow soldiers, and companions. There was widespread ownership and encompassing inclusiveness - the word *all* is frequently used by Paul.[70]

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[67] G. Walter Hansen, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Letter to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 8-11.

[68] Martin, *Tyndale Commentary: Philippians,* 40.

[69] Hansen, *Pillar Commentary: Philippians,* 8-11.

[70] 26 times, according to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.* McLean: MacDonald Publishing Company.

Paul's plea in this letter is to unity: operating out of one mind, being of one accord, seeing things from other people's point of view.[71] In Ephesians 4:2-6, Paul echoes this theme:

> Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Eight times in these five verses, Paul uses the word "one". The reader would have to be rather obtuse to miss his emphasis - be unified, of one mind and spirit. After a description of gifts, Paul says in verse 16, "From him *the whole body*, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, *grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work*" (author's emphasis). This is continued in verse 25 - "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body." J.B. Phillips states this verse thusly: "For we are not separate units but intimately related to each other in Christ."[72] Powerful! The Community is a "we" thing, not a "me" thing. Which includes the leaders and the leadership style or system that is employed.[73] Paul's 'style' is once again demonstrated to be an Open System, where the leadership includes, involves, and invites everyone to participate in the march toward redemption.[74] The message, *as well as the method*, is redemptive and open.

Paul is transparent, open, and vulnerable:

- 1:12-26 – Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel…. the former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter?...Christ is preached…. Christ will be exalted

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[71] Martin, *Tyndale Commentary: Philippians*, 46-50.

[72] J.B. Phillips, *The New Testament in Modern English: For Schools*.

[73] William C. Brownson, Jr., *The Plan is God's* (New York: The Half Moon Press, 1968), 26, 31.

[74] Martin, *Tyndale Commentary: Philippians*, 133.

in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

- 2:2 – ...make my joy complete by being like-minded...;
- 2:27-28 – But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow...so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety.
- 3:4-14 – If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more;...whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ...Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.
- 3:18 – For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears...

A characteristic of redemptive leadership is being real and vulnerable, open with thoughts and feelings.[75] In these examples, Paul is humble, selfless, sold out to the cause of Christ, willing to share emotions, all of which provide a window into his soul. His style is to reveal himself and his inner workings, which serves the dual purpose of encouraging others to do the same and drawing them to him. He welcomes them into not only his ministry but into his life. The net effect is to create an openness and environment in which to reciprocate this with each other.[76]

Paul's focus is on them and their growth in Christ, not on his agenda or to create dependence on him:

- 1:6 – ...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.
- 1:9-11 – And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ....
- 1:29-30 – For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.
- 2:5 – Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus;
- 2:15-17 – ....so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God with out fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life....even if I am being poured out like

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[75] Ron A. Carucci, *Leadership Divided: What Emerging Leaders Need and What You Might be Missing* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 74.

[76] Hawthorne, *Word Commentary: Philippians,* lxxvi-lxxvii.

a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.
- 3:20 – But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there....
- 4:1 – Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!

Paul's concern is that they become rooted in Christ (Eph 3:17; Col 2:7). Paul isn't "about Paul"; his concern is not with what he desires for them or would like to see happen. He is not about accomplishing his agenda for them, nor in his timing or in his way. The objective of Paul's mission, vision, call, and way of operating is that the Lord would be glorified (Phil 1:11; 2:11; 3:19; 4:19; 4:20). Paul is sold out to Christ - for him to live is Christ, not Paul (1:21).

One brief final demonstration of Paul's open approach occurs in chapters 12-14 of the first letter to the Corinthians. The entire letter specifically addresses divisions within the Community; in this section Paul expounds on gifts and love, and the church's responsibility as the Body of Christ. That he found it necessary to broach the subject is clear evidence that an issue had surfaced. "The Corinthians had apparently used the *gifts* as a means of fomenting division. They regarded the possession of such *gifts* as a matter for pride, and set up one against another on the basis of the possession or otherwise of this or that gift."[77]

Paul took them to task for an attitude and approach that splintered and divided them into haves and have-nots; aggrandized individuals at the expense of the Body; and threatened their unity and functioning as the Body of Christ. His wording in I Corinthians 12:1-2 sets the tone for what follows – the word *brothers* is used,

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[77] Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 169.

"introducing a section where there may be much rebuke;"[78] the terms "pagans" or "Gentiles" are used as references to their former life and pursuits of that which leads away from the Kingdom. While Paul deeply loves and is committed to the church at Corinth, he minces no words in his leadership to them on this issue. His love for the Lord, *and* for them, would let him do no less. Paul then spends the rest of chapter 12, as well as chapters 13 and 14, stating in straightforward and direct language the themes of unity, a proper perspective on gifts, and a Body that is based on and emanates from love.

However, it is important to recall the words of Paul in chapter one, which serve as a pre-cursor to chapters 12-14. Paul states, "I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way… He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor 1:4-5, 8). Paul endears himself to them as he states his affection for, commitment to, and belief in them. He has history with them, having personally entered into their lives (Acts 18). He has been vulnerable, transparent, and open – "I came to you in weakness and fear" (I Cor 2:3). He regards them as partners, referring to them as brothers repeatedly through the first eleven chapters (twenty three times).

His willingness to address these issues in such an open and direct manner suggests his love and his commitment to the Corinthians. The approach which Paul takes is not only a reflection of his absolute surrender to the Lordship of Christ; it is a demonstration of the commitment he has to dealing with issues of importance in an open and redemptive manner.

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[78] Morris, *I Corinthians,* 166.

The conclusion reached by the author from what has been presented above is that Paul demonstrated a redemptive Open System in his personal life and public ministry[79].

The Early Church and the Open System

As much as Paul was the agent that God used to establish the early church beyond Antioch and Jerusalem into the Greek and Roman world, the church existed while Paul was still Saul. In fact, Saul wanted nothing to do with the very church he would later, as Paul, go through the hammers of Hades to promulgate. Saul did all he could to abolish and eliminate it.[80] The church has its roots in Christ, for the church is nothing more, and also nothing less, than the Body of Christ.[81] Ordained and existing from the person of Christ, the church must also function as Christ did. As has been established thus far, that is as an Open System. Operating from an Open System would be reflected in the way that they lived, as well as the way that they addressed the issues that they encountered as the people of God.

They Lived Openly

All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people (Acts 2:44-47a).
    All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had (Acts 4:32).

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[79] Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology,* trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), 205ff.

[80] Acts 7:58-8:1; 9:1-2.

[81] Hans Kung, *The Church* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), 234-237.

This Body resembled the One in whom they believed and the One for whom they existed. Just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit exist and function in Community, so too the early church existed and functioned in Community. Being a Christ one was never intended to be a solo venture. Being a Christ one meant becoming part of a family, the family of God: "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...." (John 1:12). "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:26-28). "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (Eph 2:19-22).

As the Body, they shared their time, their meals, their faith, their possessions, and their hearts with each other.[82] As expressed in Acts 2:44-47, initially this would have most surely included the Twelve, with those subsequently becoming believers being included. The tenor of these verses is that the Twelve continued to live and function as they had while with the Savior – living together and sharing everything in common; giving freely from shared possessions to anyone who had need; daily worshipping, breaking bread, and eating. As their numbers grew, an adjustment to this type of communal living would have been necessary. Numbers and proximity would have made

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[82] William J. Larkin, *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series: Acts* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 81-82.

it unlikely that they continued living in such a manner.[83] In Acts 4:32-35, the emphasis is on stewardship – "no one *claimed* that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had; proceeds from the sale of possessions were *distributed* to those in need" (author's emphasis). "…we cannot press these words [v.32] into meaning that the believers had literally renounced private, in favour of common, ownership….Although in fact and in law they continued to own their goods, yet in heart and mind they cultivated an attitude so radical that they thought of their possessions as being available to help their needy sisters and brothers."[84] The format of their sharing and living did not define the Community. What did define them was their mutual desire to pursue Christ, and to do so together as a united Body.

They extended and received accountability as they lived out their faith in Community.[85] They pursued each other, and pursued the best in each other. Their focus and commitment was to the One who had lived, died, and risen to secure their salvation. This resulted in the development of a system of living, sharing, worshipping, and witnessing within the Body that was open and contributed to a redemptive culture.[86] They way in which they lived, related, communicated, and functioned contributed to their growth in Christ and as His Body.

They Dealt with Issues Openly

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were

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[83] I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986), 84.

[84] John Stott, *The Spirit, The Church, and the World: The Message of Acts* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 107.

[85] David G Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 209-211.

[86] Stott, *The Spirit, The Church, and the World,* 109-110.

being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group (Acts 6:1-5a).

Living openly, in community, meant that the early church lived in such a way that they valued confronting issues rather than avoiding, ignoring, or subjugating them. They brought issues out into the open, into the light. Their modus operandi was no "boys in the back room" way of dealing with issues that threatened the Community and their faith. Rather, this was a *Body* at work. And not just any body; this was Christ's Body. When one member was suffering, the entire Body felt the pain and reacted as one. "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body;…so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (I Cor 12:12-13a; 25-27).

Being a Community and living in unity meant coming together with a willingness to openly regard issues, and their mutual and respective needs. "Most importantly, however, the present context suggests that, if decisive action had not been taken to deal with the social issue disturbing the church, 'growth' of the word may not have continued."[87] The inequity and favoritism that surfaced in the distribution of food to widows was embraced; as was the central call and responsibility of the Twelve - to preach and proclaim Christ. Entertaining the one issue did not diminish the other. Both

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[87] Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles,* 229.

issues were real; hence, were taken seriously and dealt with. The open way in which the Community and leadership responded to these produced a win/win result, on multiple levels:

- The issue that was disturbing the Grecian Jews was heard. Their issue was given legitimacy, as were they. "While we can take comfort in the fact that the early church also had problems of disunity, we are challenged by the way these problems were immediately dealt with (cf. also the deception of Ananias and Sapphira). Several factors could have prompted the apostles to shelve this problem without dealing with it right away. But they did deal with it, and the church took a great step forward."[88] Their pleas were heard and appropriately responded to - a council of seven was appointed to care for the distribution of food to the widows (Acts 6:3-6).

- The Twelve "gathered all the disciples together" (Acts 6:2). The wisdom of the Community was valued, sought, and utilized. The Twelve demonstrated a willingness to include those who were more recent members of the family. The Twelve had been with Christ from the beginning, and thus could have leaned on their status and position as "charter members". They chose not to. Christ and His Body took precedence over personal position. They regarded the perspectives and insights of the Body.[89] The result was that their call and mission were clarified and endorsed by the Community (Acts 6:5).

- The giftedness of the Body surfaced and was employed. "Naturally there are different gifts and functions; individually grace is given to us in different ways

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[88] Ajith Fernando, *The NIV Application Commentary: From Biblical Text....to Contemporary Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 228.
[89] Fee, *Tyndale Commentary: Philippians,* 120.

out of the rich diversity of Christ's giving....His gifts were made that Christians might be properly equipped for their service, that the whole body might be built up...For it is from the head that the whole body, as a harmonious structure knit together by the joints with which it is provided, grows by the proper functioning of individual parts to its full maturity in love" (Eph 4:7, 12, 16 - Phillips).

The surface outcome of the twelve consulting and including the Body was that a troublesome issue was resolved, their call and mission were clarified, and gifts were called forth and utilized. However, something even greater was accomplished - the Body matured. When "the proper functioning of individual parts" is accomplished, the Body "grows to its full maturity in love."[90] The glorification of Christ is the chief end - of us as individuals and of the Body collective. When the Body functions in an open and redemptive manner, both the individuals who compose it and the corporate gathering accomplish their mission and call while satisfying their purpose.[91]

They Responded to Conflict and Threat Openly

In Damascus, there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying".... "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem".... But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel".... Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul"....He [Saul] got up and was baptized (Acts 9:10-11; 13; 15-17a; 18b).

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[90] Brownson, *The Plan is God's,* 28.
[91] Francis Foulkes, *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1963), 124-125.

As mentioned above, Saul was public enemy #1 of the church at this point in its infancy. Saul was to be avoided, not associated with. Yet, Ananias, after persistent beseeching from the Lord, goes to Saul. From the human perspective, this was asking for trouble, a suicidal move. From a spiritual perspective, however, it was sacrifice. Sacrifice of self, status, position, and obedience. When God's people are open to taking risks *in the direction* of their fears, when God's people are open to march *into* their fears rather than to go where their fears would lead them, redemption is the result.[92] It is redemption on multiple levels. God redeems both the faithful and those ministered to by the faithful. Saul *and* Ananias both were the recipients of God's redemption.[93]

A significant but easily overlooked statement by Luke is found in v. 17 – "Placing his hands on Saul, he said, 'Brother Saul'". This is reminiscent of the manner in which Jesus healed the leper in Mark 1 – "Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean'" (Mark 1:41). As momentous as the healing was in both cases, the *manner* in which the healing took place is just as, if not more, noteworthy. By touching the leper, Jesus entered into his malady.[94] Lepers were ostracized, avoided, shunned, and made to live outside the city walls. No one touched a leper.[95] No one, that is, except the Great Healer. The manner in which Jesus healed him was of vital importance. Not for the disease, but for the inner travail that was gripping the leper. To reach those portions of his life that had been deeply wounded and impacted by the leprosy, where he lived his moments, Jesus had to touch him. And did

[92] Lloyd John Ogilvie, *Drumbeat of Love: The Unlimited Power of the Spirit as Revealed in the Book of Acts* (Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1976), 132.

[93] *The Interpreter's Bible, Volume IX* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1954), 123-126.

[94] David E. Garland, *Mark: The NIV Application Commentary – From Biblical Text...to Contemporary Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 87-89.

[95] William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 85.

so at great personal risk, for Jesus made himself unclean in the process.[96] Openness, having higher regard for the need of the other than for the need of self, is the way of the Redeemer. And of the redeemed, as well.

Ananias' touch, followed by his welcoming address, "Brother Saul", which was in turn followed by the public act of Saul's baptism, must have had a powerful impact on Saul and his future ministry. He, the chief antagonist of the church, was being welcomed into the household of faith, and also into the community of grace. The openness of Ananias, and the open way in which he received Saul, put flesh on the redemption that had taken place within Saul several days earlier. [97]

> When he [Saul] came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles....So Saul stayed with them...He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him. When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus (Acts 9:26-27a; 28a; 29-30).

As he had in Damascus, Saul elicited fear and encountered skeptical resistance from the believing community in Jerusalem. Initial opposition became acceptance and even assistance (needing the help of the Community to flee both places). That is the result of openness. Had Ananias and Barnabas been closed off to the voice and possibilities of God, their lives, Saul's life, and the entire course of church history might have been radically altered.[98] But they were not closed; they were open to the leading of the Lord. As were the disciples in Jerusalem after Barnabas vouched for Saul. "True conversion always issues in church membership. It is not only that converts must join the Christian Community, but that the Christian Community must welcome converts, especially those

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[96] Garland, *NIV Commentary,* 75.

[97] Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *The Communicator's Commentary: Acts* (Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1983), 169-170.

[98] Fee, *Tyndale Commentary: Philippians,* 188-189.

from a different religious, ethnic or social background."[99] Such is the result of redemption, and of an Open System.

Peter and the Early Church

The openness of the early church is further demonstrated in a final look at how they dealt with conflict and threat, found in Acts 10-11. Peter had embarked on a discipleship tour of the region surrounding Jerusalem. While staying at the home of Simon the tanner in the seacoast village of Joppa, Peter had a vision in which the Lord instructed him to eat what the Jews considered unclean (Acts 10:9-16). That this was an instruction that included more than culinary habits became apparent when men arrived from the nearly town of Caesarea, sent by Cornelius the Roman centurion. A Gentile. They requested an audience with Peter on behalf of Cornelius (Acts 10:17-23). The next day Peter dutifully and without hesitation set off with them for Caesarea. "Talking with him [Cornelius], Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. He said to them, 'You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection'" (Acts 10:27-29a).

Peter was given a crossroads moment: hear and respond out of obedience to the Lord (be open to the Lord's leading), or continue wedded to what was known and comfortable. He obeyed. When the Lord is the lord of our lives, there is no other option than to be open - to whatever, whenever, and wherever He leads us.[100] Convention is not a consideration to the disciple. Tradition is not sacred to the disciple. The comfort and

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[99] Stott, *The Spirit, The Church, and the World,* 178.
[100] Fernando, *NIV Commentary,* 325-331.

security of the known is not the objective of a disciple. The Lord Jesus Christ is the center and focus of a disciple. Peter was a disciple. He heard and obeyed. Which meant moving into unfamiliar and unconventional ground. No easy task; but one that was necessary to continue as a disciple.[101] Openness once again is linked with discipleship and redemption. Redemptive openness begins with Jesus. A disciple is one who is open to the will and way of the Savior. Period. This is a difficult road to travel, no question; but the only way in which one can be a follower of His. Openness is one of the bricks that make up the pathway to becoming both a redeemed one and a redemptive agent.[102]

When they responded in faith and the Holy Spirit came upon them as evidenced by speaking in tongues, Peter responded by saying, "'Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.' So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:47-48). Theirs was full and total inclusion into the family of faith and the community of believers. Peter was open to the will and way of the Lord. Which put him in jeopardy with those on the home front.

"So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and said, 'You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them'" (Acts 11:2-3). Peter responded with an explanation and apologetic, which included v. 17 – "...if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God." The Community was initially resistant to what they understood was the way of the Lord regarding believers and the uncircumcised (Acts 11:1-3). And they openly communicated this to Peter. They could have grumbled and

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[101] Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles,* 181, 188.
[102] Stott, *The Spirit, The Church, and the World,* 187, 197.

mumbled and gossiped about their discontent. Rather, they openly confronted Peter. Peter, in turn, openly responded to their concerns and provided a recounting of what he had experienced. The result? "When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God" (Acts 11:18).

As has been presented above, the early church demonstrated a repeated and consistent openness to changes that God was bringing their way; which would then have a generous impact on the growth of the kingdom. As humans, we frequently receive change with resistance and hesitation.[103] However, resistance itself is not the source of our problem. The problem sets in when we anchor ourselves to our perspective, when we regard our perspective as the correct and sole truth, when we are wedded to our druthers and dogma and continue our resistance. In short, when we are closed. It is difficult for the Spirit to move in our midst when we are closed to His advances. An open mind, heart, soul, and strength, however, are fertile ground for the Spirit.[104]

<div style="text-align:center">Summary</div>

The central message of scripture is the love and redemptive activity of the Triune God. As has been stated and demonstrated in this chapter, an Open System is modeled through the way that the love and redemptive activity of God are revealed throughout scripture. God's will is redemption, and the way that God pursues redemption exhibits an Open System. The conclusion, therefore, is that an Open System is evidenced in the very heart and nature of God. Within the Trinity there is unity, consistency, oneness, equality, unanimity, and coordinated cooperation.

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[103] Ogilvie, *Communicator's Commentary: Acts,* 180-181.
[104] Ogilvie, *Communicator's Commentary: Acts,* 181, 183.

Creation is an expression of the oneness and resulting openness of the Trinity. The Three extended Itself to creation and Mankind to such a degree that we are welcomed into Their fellowship, created to be in Community with each other, and given power of decision and free choice. A significant aspect of our creation is our free will - freedom of choice and decision. We can choose to do, think, or be whatever, whenever, including choosing an open or a closed system, along with the consequences of those choices. Even the disastrous result of our choices is addressed in the openness of the Trinity: our restoration and redemption has been secured through the shed blood of Christ on the cross. "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). God's love is *that* deep and encompassing and open.

Jesus, the Son of God, the second in the Trinity, is the embodiment and demonstration of the nature of God. Jesus willingly chose to be humbled when He emptied Himself of all but love by becoming one of us. And then continued that humility when, in obedience to the Father's will, He went to the cross on our behalf. The message of love was coupled with a method that suggests openness.

Paul demonstrated an approach that was open as he bore witness to Christ. His message was always Christ crucified, while his methodology modeled an Open System: witness for Paul was withness. His approach was personal and relational. Paul invested himself into the lives of those to whom he ministered, with transparency and vulnerability being the hallmarks of his style.

The early church followed the example of Christ and Paul as they lived, functioned, and responded to life in the Body with an Open System and redemptive approach.

When a leader is sold out to Christ and His redemptive way, the concern is with redemption. First, last, and always. Redemption is in the message, the method, and the outcome of their life and ministry. The result is redeemed followers, who are attached to the Lord, following His will and his way in their lives.[105] *Who* they are influences *what* they do, as well as *how* they do it.[106] Their message and method reflect the Lord. There is no higher legacy that one can leave than that. There is no more important agenda than to give ourselves to growing disciples that, in turn, grow disciples.[107] The conclusion of the author is that it is not possible to follow Christ, and in so doing becoming sold out to His will and way, and produce a culture that is anything other than a redemptive culture; or to produce a system that is anything other than an Open System. Those who choose to live as disciples of Jesus, lead as His agents in the reconciliation process, and labor as He did have no choice but to do so as He did, and in a manner that is consistent with what is revealed in scripture.[108] That is clearly with an Open System of communication, relationship, and function.

With the Biblical and Theological evidence for an Open System established, we now move onto chapter three. This will include a review of the literature and research that has been done on this topic.

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[105] Brian J. Dodd, *Empowered Church Leadership: Ministry in the Spirit According to Paul* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 22-23.

[106] Leighton Ford, *Transforming Leadership: Jesus' Way of Creating Vision, Shaping Values, & Empowering Change* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 38.

[107] Oswald J. Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 148-149.

[108] Ted W. Engstrom, *The Making of a Christian Leader* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 1999.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW OF OPEN SYSTEMS

Systems Thinking

An examination of the type of *systems* of communication, relationship, and function begins with an understanding of the background and importance of Systems Theory, or *Systems Thinking*[1] as it is referred to in organizational theory.[2] As will be shown and demonstrated throughout this chapter, including examples cited from numerous authors speaking to this topic, the body of literature that addresses the topics of Open Systems, culture, and/or Leadership contains a consistent message: organizations (or ministries, for our present purpose) that expect to be successful in accomplishing their mission, and at the same time positively develop and impact their most valued resource - their people - will be those that employ, and operate from, a systems thinking perspective. Organizations that seek to be interdependent rather than independent, that seek to be collaborative and collegial, and that take advantage of the wisdom of the community are those that are positioned to more fully and comprehensively realize and accomplish their mission.

Peter Drucker, founder of the Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management, wrote an article for the Harvard Business Review in 1988 in which he postulated that businesses 20 years hence [in 2008] would function vastly different than was the norm in the mid-20th century - "...the typical business will be knowledge-based,

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[1] Peter L. Steinke, *Healthy Congregations: A systems Approach* (Alban Institute, Inc., 1996), 3-4.
[2] Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1994), 7.

an organization composed largely of specialists who direct and discipline their own performance through organized feedback from colleagues, customers, and headquarters…..Businesses, especially large ones, have little choice but to become information-based."[3] How insightful he was! In the twenty years since he wrote the article, changes in the world and the business community have indeed resulted in a move in this direction. Specialists have replaced a work force that once was overwhelmingly comprised of manual, assembly line, or clerical labor. Technology, most notably the computer, has taken over. The availability and exchange of information has literally changed the way the world is communicating and conducting business.

In the present business climate, it is impossible for a few individuals at the top to possess the vast amount of knowledge that is both available and required to make decisions; or to do so in a time frame that has decreased from days to minutes. "Today, systems thinking is needed more than ever because we are becoming overwhelmed by complexity. Perhaps for the first time in history, humankind has the capacity to create far more information than anyone can absorb, to foster far greater interdependency than anyone can manage, and to accelerate change far faster than anyone's ability to keep pace."[4] A team that functions interdependently is necessary to take facts, figures, numbers, and statistics and make sense out of it. We are in an era wherein specialization reigns.

In sports, there is the *third down back*, the *kickoff specialist*, and the *set up pitcher* (who arrives before the *closer* is called upon). In the 1950's and 60's, *general*

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[3] Peter F. Drucker, *Harvard Business Review on Knowledge Management* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 1998), 2.
[4] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 69.

practitioner is what was listed on the shingle of most doctors. Today, we start with our *primary care physician*, who refers us to a *specialist*.

All levels of employees and volunteers are utilized in a systems approach. "In the information-based organization, the knowledge will be primarily at the bottom, in the minds of the specialists who do different work and direct themselves."[5] What is obviously called for is mutuality; cooperative exchange of information; and participatory collaboration regarding which information is useful, as well as how to best utilize and implement what is decided upon. Interdependency and sharing information is one of the fundamental aspects of systems thinking.

Systems thinking is an approach, a perspective, a way of looking at and considering the functioning of a particular group. The classic application of systems thinking is in regards to problem solving. That which is seen and most obvious, the surface symptom, is in most cases not the root cause of the problem. If, in the examination of a problem, the conclusion is reached that 'that individual' or 'that department' is the culprit, in many cases the tip of the iceberg has been mistaken as the entire mass. If one has the courage, the commitment to the cause (which, for our present purposes, is the redemptive process), and the wisdom to look beyond the obvious, the system itself will be revealed, along with those interrelated and interconnecting parts that are contributing to the issue being examined.

"A systems approach claims that any person or event stands in relationship to something. You cannot isolate anything and understand it. The parts function as they do because of the presence of the other parts. All parts interface and affect each other....Thus change in one part produces change in another part, even in the whole.

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[5] Drucker, *Harvard Business Review,* 6.

There is a 'ripple' through the system."[6] "…since an organization is a living, interconnected, and integrated system, an action taken in one place influences things elsewhere."[7] "When we think systemically [openly], we cannot understand one thing without the other."[8]

Visualize the system like the following. It includes a pebble, a small boy, and a pond on a clear and windless day. The boy tosses the pebble into the pond, which produces concentric circles in the otherwise glassy surface. No one who happens upon the scene immediately after the pebble's entrance into the pond would assume that the ripples 'just happened'. They are part of an interconnected system - the boy, the pebble, the calm day, and the pond. Understanding one necessitates considering and understanding the others.

If individuals were ever to operate in a system in which they were the sole member, then and only then would they be both the solitary source of and solution to their problems. However, there are few if any situations in our lives that are this easy, when we are the lone participant. We exist in a dependent state. We are connected to others: for life's necessities, for work and pleasure, for relationships. We are interconnected and dependent with our body, mind, and spirit. Hence, since we are not alone and do not function in isolation, is it not also reasonable to conclude that the problems we encounter with others will necessitate solutions that also involve those same people? Life is a system, from our anatomy to our occupation to our relationships. Looking at organizations from a systems perspective not only makes sense, it is the only

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[6] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations*, 3-4
[7] Alan G. Robinson and Dean M. Schroeder, *Ideas Are Free* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2004), 11.
[8] Peter L. Steinke, *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems* (Alban Institute, Inc., 1993), 4.

way to see the picture accurately and comprehensively. Especially so when considering both the internal and external relationships, communication, and functioning that are their makeup.

"The systems perspective tells us that we must look beyond individual mistakes or bad luck to understand important problems. We must look beyond personalities and events. We must look into the underlying structures which shape individual actions and create the conditions where types of events become likely."[9]

As mentioned above, one of the dimensions of systems thinking is that as a result of seeing the components of an organization as interrelated and parts of a unified whole, each of the component parts is valuable and necessary to the functioning of the whole. The interrelated and interconnecting parts are utilized to gather, contribute, process, and apply information. The system is not dependant on any one person, but on all those in the system. "One of the most important ramifications of this approach [systems thinking] for individuals who must organize and make sense out of a great deal of information [such as members of a clergy] is that it no longer becomes necessary to 'know all about something' in order to comprehend it;"[10] This is the polar opposite of the practice of limiting the flow of information from a select group of "know-it-alls" who carry the responsibility for determining the communication, relationship, and function of the organization. Systems thinking leads quite naturally to a decentralized, nonhierarchical approach to management and leadership. "Each part of the system....is connected to, or

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[9] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline,* 42-43.
[10] Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1985), 15.

can have its own effect upon, every other part. Each component, therefore, rather than having its own discrete identity or input, operates as part of a larger whole."[11]

"The word *whole* implies that there are parts and the parts are connected. Wholeness is not to be confused with oneness. Wholeness is not about seamlessness; wholeness is not sameness. Wholeness means two or more parts are interconnected. No single element of the whole is thought of as functioning independently of the other components. Wholeness is relational. In wholeness differences are not eliminated; rather, they become alive. The different parts interact and cooperate. Wholeness involves various parts coming together and interacting."[12] This echoes and reinforces what was postulated in chapter two regarding unity and oneness. It was proffered that Paul's instruction to the Philippians concerning unity was not universal agreement. Rather, it was to be united in spirit, in commitment to each other as a Body (pages 46-48). Paul was modeling systems thinking 2000 years ago.

"Everything alive lives in some sort of environment and interacts with it. For people an important part of any environment is other people. We affect them; they affect us."[13] Systems thinking is a way of perceiving and interpreting our relationships, communication, and function. We do not exist in a vacuum. "No man is an island" is not only a movie and a mantra; but more importantly, a truth about life. We live and work in connection with others. Hence, of vital importance to both establishing and understanding the operations and functions that take place within any group is to consider *the way* in which we interact and interrelate. The way in which we interact with others is determined in no small measure by the system that is present. An Open System parallels

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[11] Friedman, *Generation to Generation*, 15.
[12] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations*, 6.
[13] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations*, 7.

the concepts and principles of a systems thinking approach - interconnected, interdependent, with interrelated parts.

In chapter two, the Trinity and Creation were presented as examples of an Open System. "Many parallels exist between 'system thinking' and the biblical record. Most notable is the interrelatedness of all things. Certainly the biblical writers were not system thinkers in any modern sense, but they spoke of systemic forces, alive then as today. Trinitarian faith, for instance, sees all reality in relationship. God is three *separate* persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – yet *one*.....The historic creeds of the church indicate that the three persons of the Trinity are not fused. There is diversity in unity."[14] Balance, proper proportion, equity, and rhythm in relationships are established. We are created to be in relationship with each other. Each of us functions in relationship with others. The question, then, is not whether we are in relationships. Rather, it is *what kind* of relationships we will have - healthy or unhealthy, functional or dysfunctional, redemptive or restrictive, interdependent or independent. Dietrich Bonhoeffer captures this thought in *Life Together* when he states, "Every member serves the whole body, either to its health or to its destruction."[15] Not to be confused with Bohnoeffer, but bearing a similar truth, is this sign in the barber shop I frequent - "Everyone contributes something to this establishment - some when they enter, some when they leave!"

Redemptive relationships are those in which health, interconnectivity, communication, and holism are present; the very kind of relationships that redemptive leaders are seeking to develop and sustain. "The people who are most in position to enhance the health of a congregation [or organization or ministry] are precisely those

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[14] Steinke, *How Your Church Family Works,* 117.
[15] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1954), 89.

who have been empowered to be responsible, namely the leaders. They are the chief stewards; they are the people who are willing to be accountable for the welfare of the congregation. They set a tone, invite collaboration, make decisions, map a direction, establish boundaries, encourage self-expression, restrain what threatens the integrity of the whole, and keep the congregation's direction aligned with its purposes.....Health is wholeness. Health means all the parts are working together to maintain balance. Health means all the parts are interacting to function as a whole."[16] The focus of systems thinking is on the component parts of the organization or group. Systems thinking is a *we* thing. In a systems thinking environment, the concern is how the individuals connect with and contribute to each other. Open Systems are a necessary contributor to the presence of systems thinking, and as was established in chapter one, to the culture of an organization. It is to an Open System of communication, relationship, and function that we now turn our attention.

Open and Closed Systems

In this section, we will further develop and expand on the comparison of open and closed systems that was submitted in chapter one.

There are two principle ways to describe or define a person, place, or thing – stating what it *is,* and stating what it *is not.* Before we settle more fully into what an Open System is, we will take a look at what it is not.

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[16] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations,* vii.

What an Open System is *NOT*

Stated conversely, an Open System is not closed. Examples of a closed system include:

A closed system is a rigid system, in which exclusion, limited access, discrimination, and status quo are preferred. The few are at the top are served at the expense of the many. The reason that a closed system is rigid is that those who are in leadership seek to preserve what is in place, and thereby ensure their control over it. An Open System, a system with flexibility, fluidity, and widespread inclusion, is not easy to control. A rigid system is much easier to control. Hence, those in leadership who seek to retain power and remain in control, who want to control the boundaries and functioning of the system prefer a closed system. Only those who share their value system, who see things the same way they see them, and who can be trusted to perpetuate the system are included and brought into leadership roles by those in control. In this system, power is exerted by the few upon the many. Power and position are guarded and leveraged to protect territory. Although veiled and never overtly stated, preservation of self and of the system is the actual mission of this approach. The status quo is maintained at all costs.

Peter Senge, in *The Fifth Discipline*, suggests that an organization that is committed to learning is the organization that will flourish and thrive in the future. "When we give up this illusion [that the world is created of separate, unrelated forces] – we can then build 'learning organizations', organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people

are continually learning how to learn together."[17] A closed system does not allow for this. What is created in a closed system are independent and unrelated parts, held together by those who lord over the constituency. This is problematic, for legislation from on high contributes to neither involvement nor commitment. "Traditional organizations (do) not care about enrollment and commitment. The command and control hierarchy require[s] only compliance."[18]

Other authors agree - Ron Carucci: "If you insist on overly owning the reins of your organization, your potential will be muted....You will have thousands of people sitting on the sidelines watching you, not actively engaged in the process of advancing your organization."[19] William and Kathleen Lundin: "Of one thing you can be sure, you will never find an instance of a command and control philosophy of management promoting affection and caring as a motivator."[20] Judith Glaser, in her book *Creating WE*, emphasizes the need to break down walls that separate and construct ways to bring people together: "A territorial atmosphere triggers Territorial Instincts and we act defensively to protect what is ours. An inclusive and supportive atmosphere triggers Vital Instincts and we reach out and partner with others....The 'old boy network' mentality is not healthy when its intention is to exclude those who don't fit in. It *is* healthy when it's about including, embracing, appreciating, and valuing. When these ingredients are missing, employees feel outside the system and they resist the direction the company is heading."[21]

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[17] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline,* 3.
[18] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline,* 222.
[19] Ron A. Carucci, *Leadership Divided* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), viii.
[20] William Lundin & Kathleen Lundin, *The Healing Manager* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1993), 13.
[21] Judith E. Glaser, *Creating WE – Change I-Thinking to WE-Thinking, Build a Healthy Thriving Organization* (Avon: Platinum Press, 2005), 22, 29.

Rigid hierarchies are effective at accomplishing that which mitigates *against* accomplishing mission and achieving vision. Along the way, learning, growth, and development are prevented, and those who are the most valuable resource and asset of any organization (its people) are excluded and diminished. "Unfortunately, rigid congregations do not learn. Blind to their own blindness, they fail to see what they are embedded in. Rigid behaviors or patterns mean there is less awareness, less thinking, less self-control available."[22]

The 'they' referred to above are *all* those who are participating in the system. *They* are both the perpetrators and those who are willing to be perpetrated upon. *They* are those who take over, as well as those who are taken over. It is the bulldozers *and* the welcome mats. Unfortunately, there are no victims in the closed system, only volunteers. Those who are omitted, voiceless, and even bullied are willing participants. They help to perpetuate the system as much as anyone in it. Hence, *all* involved are infected and equally sick, co-conspirators in a dysfunctional system.

A closed system is also one in which homogenous, narrow, "company line" thinking prevails. As was stated in Table 1 in chapter one, a closed system is a breeding ground for secretive and selective alliances. Some are formal ("executive team", "leadership council", "elder board"), while others are informal (the "good ol' boys", the "boys in the back room"). Whatever the derivation, they accomplish the same disease – creating the have's and the have not's; those who are "in the know", and those who are "out of the know"; those who are included and those excluded. Information is filtered and retained according to the values and priorities of the few who have the power and control. A team is not formed. Rather, the organization is a collection of individuals

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[22] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations,* 75.

who think, act, and function not as one but as an assembly of those who gather as a result of their collective neuroses. It "works" for them; but, sadly, not for anything redemptive. "Human beings want to be included and appreciated. When we are not included, we feel left out and we reject the system that excludes us."[23]

This breeds secrets and an environment in which information is selective and filtered. Only information that justifies and validates "our" way of thinking is sought and welcomed. Truth and objectivity are afterthoughts, if thoughts at all. A closed system invites to the table only those trusted few who are at the top. To welcome opinions that "fall outside the box" or that call into question the prevailing way of thinking or conducting business would be dis-equilibrating to the system. This, in turn, would threaten the system, and perhaps more poignantly, those who are the keepers of the system, those in leadership. Listening, then, is tremendously selective and limited to a favored few.

In a closed system, thoughts and input are solicited only from those few who are on the inside, i.e., *those who are deemed safe*. By limiting and controlling the flow of information, the few will perpetrate their will and way upon the many. In addition, entertaining variant information is not valued. To do so would take time and energy from the bottom line; which in a closed system is synonymous with results, not with the people who make up the organization.

The net result of a mind or collective minds that are closed to heterogeneous thinking is to stifle and retard, if not prohibit, the realization of accomplishing mission and achieving vision. As mentioned above on page 73, the information available today,

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[23] Glaser, *Creating WE*, 29.

and the speed at which it is generated and communicated, is far too voluminous for one person or a small group to manage, process, or grasp.

"The real bottle neck to ideas is not usually front-line employees but the poor reception the ideas get from the organization.....Employees often know how to improve performance and reduce costs *more intelligently* than their bosses do. Yet they are rarely given a chance to do anything about it. No one asks them for their ideas."[24] "Leaders at all levels will listen up to a point.....a make-or-break threshold of internal anxiety – the anxiety of having to change, to trust others, and renounce autocratic behavior."[25] Many CEO's don't want to listen because listening creates a crossroads moment, which can be discomforting and awkward. They have listened; now what? Having listened, they are faced with a choice – respond to and honor what was said by considering change; or not. When change is unwelcome, so are ideas. For those who avoid change, it is also easier to avoid listening. "Few things are more disengaging than a boss who doesn't listen...Even if employee ideas are not adopted, people must believe they were heard and ideas were considered."[26]

The Body of Christ and organizations, and the systems that exist within them, are reflective of the human body – composed of diverse, interconnected parts. Systems require diversity to function healthily. "Our bodies would not be fully functioning entities if their parts were all 'ears' or all 'eyes'. They require diversity. In fact, it is the magnificent diversity of cells in our bodies that enables us to function at a high level. This is as true for a body of people as it is for a body of an individual person. When a

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[24] Robinson and Schroeder, *Ideas Are Free*, 99, xi-xii.
[25] Lundin and Lundin, *The Healing Manager*, 22.
[26] Julie Gebauer and Don Lowman, *Closing the Engagement Gap: How Great Companies Unlock Employee Potential for Superior Results* (New York: Penguin Group, 2008), 168.

group is diverse, it is more resourceful, having many ideas, gifts, and functions at work."[27] Diversity is not descriptive of a closed system.

A result of a system that seeks to preserve and protect the status quo is resistance to hear, especially that which does not support and validate the present system. This creates an inability to observe what is actually occurring across the system; which, in turn, inhibits the system from interpreting reality. One cannot interpret what one does not see. Dis-equilibration can be a valuable thing – if it is recognized and embraced. When it seen for what it is and for what it is suggesting, the resulting self-examination can be a lens into the state of an organization. Issues and troubles – dis-equilibration – function much like pain. Pain is present because of disease or issues in the system; it is an indication and warning signal that something is wrong. The presence of pain can either be regarded as an annoyance or threat, something to be avoided and eliminated as quickly as possible; or, seen for what it is, an emergency signal, and heeded and regarded. "…once regarded as an enemy, not a warning signal, pain loses its power to instruct. Silencing pain without considering its message is like disconnecting a ringing fire alarm to avoid receiving bad news."[28] If the response to pain is to ignore, eliminate or avoid it, then the pain is wasted and the learning is not harvested. Further, that which caused the pain has not been eliminated or dealt with, just repositioned. When the danger is not addressed, the entire organization is put in peril. In this regard, there is little difference between a closed system and the modis operandi of an ostrich.

The gift that God gives to us in pain and dis-equilibration is insight - insight into the system, which needs to be heeded. Unfortunately, a closed system is not seeking

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[27] Steinke, *How Your Church Family Works,* 56-57.
[28] Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey, *Pain: The Gift That Nobody Wants* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1993), 188.

insight; a closed system seeks itself. A closed system sees what it wants to see, and disregards the rest. When that occurs, the redemptive opportunity – the freedom that is garnered from truth - is missed (John 8:32 – "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.").

A closed system is one in which mistrust is widespread, fear is used as a primary means of motivation and management, safety is a concern, and politics are adopted as a way to advance toward and enter the upper echelon. A system with a foundation of trust welcomes, includes, and seeks the involvement of others. A trusting system builds teams. A trusting system is one in which people are valued, developed, and moved toward redemption. Where trust is not prevalent, where it is guarded, and where it is used as a commodity to control and manipulate, the system is a closed one.

"Trust based purely on position is typically short-lived…..Credibility is never established by rank."[29] The distance created from being closed can act as a protection against others. But the price for that distance is trust issues, feelings of insecurity, exclusion, and a lack of knowing others' concerns and ideas. "When we feel we are controlled and manipulated, we push back and resist change….When we are living in mistrust, we exhibit territorial behaviors expressed as self-protection at all costs."[30]

Giving up control by including others and their participation brings with it vulnerability. Vulnerability is a threatening position to be in. Vulnerability accompanies exposure. Sharing thoughts and exchanging ideas in a collaborative and collegial context exposes the participants. To opt to go there, or to opt to remain once there, requires trust. No one is willing to be exposed when the waters are unsafe. Redemptive leaders create

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[29] Carucci, *Leadership Divided,* 40.
[30] Glaser, *Creating WE,* 292.

warm, safe, inviting waters in which it is possible to consider being exposed and vulnerable. The reluctance of a team to "go there", to enter into those waters, is itself evidence of the presence of an issue, as is the way in which that reluctance is then dealt with. "A team committed to learning must be committed not only to telling the truth about what's going on 'out there,' in their business reality, but also about what's going on 'in here,' within the team itself."[31] The far easier road is to remain closed, to keep one's cards close to the vest. A far easier road; but also a road that is far less effective and less redemptive, by any measure. "Trust is clearly the central element to people feeling valued....organizations are being forced to embrace the idea of being a partner instead of a boss. While fear is the primary currency of a boss, trust is the primary currency of a partnership."[32]

"When an employee does not feel respected, well treated, and taken care of, the behavior displayed is carelessness; or just getting through the day, or avoiding getting into trouble....they do not seriously try to add value or create a culture that creates growth for the business. But when employees feel good about a company, they give it their all."[33] An environment which lacks trust creates de-valued, careless, cautious, timid, and emasculated employees.

Fear has proven to be a poor motivator when something other than the "bottom line" is desired, when redemption is central to the mission and vision. "Fear is a strong motivating factor....negative motivation and management by intimidation will get people

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[31] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 257.
[32] Joe Healey, *Radical Trust – How Today's Great Leaders Convert People to Partners* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007), 18.
[33] Gebauer and Lowman, *Closing the Engagement Gap*, 188.

to do things for the wrong reason."[34] And will be short-term. An escalating level of fear will need to be utilized if fear will continue to be an effective motivator. The only entrance for redemption in an environment fraught with fear is through the back door – through experiencing what redemption is *not*. It then will take the front door of trust to demonstrate and bring the possibility of redemption.

"Very few people truly want to live in an organization corrupted by internal politics and game playing….a nonpolitical climate also demands 'openness'…without openness it is generally impossible to break down the game playing that is deeply imbedded in most organizations. Together vision and openness are the antidotes to internal politics and game playing."[35]

In concluding this section on what an Open System is not, a clarification needs to be made. An Open System is not the sole route to redemption. As has been stated and developed thus far, every organization will operate under a system of some sort. That system will be a contributing agent to the ability of that organization to achieve its mission and purpose; either by assisting or by mitigating against those efforts. The premise that the author is operating under is that an Open System is the optimum system in which redemption and the redemptive process can take place. An Open System brings to the party that which enables, engenders, and best provides for the development of people in a redemptive process.

That being said, redemption is possible and learning can take place even in the presence of a closed system. Romans 8:28, state that, "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Steinke

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[34] Clint Swindall, *Engaged Leadership: Building a Culture to Overcome Employee Disengagement* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007), 187.
[35] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 274.

speaks to that perspective in *Healthy Congregations* – "Health is not the absence of disease. Health and disease are not opposites....Disease disrupts the body's balance. By doing so, disease provokes the healing capacities of the body to restore the very balance disease has disrupted."[36] It is true that the healing capacities of the body would not be necessary were it not for the presence of disease. It is also true that this side of heaven there *is* disease. A closed system is one that seeks an idyllic condition, in which there is neither trouble, turmoil, nor unrest. The aim is to control and protect against that which is uncontrollable. The fact is there *will* be difficulty, discord, and strife to fjord. However, God in His good graces has provided for the inevitable speed bumps and pot holes. Our bodies have an immune and disease fighting system. As do organizations – leaders that employ an Open System that is willing to see what is and embrace it. One of God's gifts to us, individually and corporately, is that there can be a "healthy" interplay between disease and health. God's economy wastes nothing. God uses it all – the good, the bad, *and* the ugly – to produce His redemptive good thing in our lives. And in organizational life.

The issue, then, is not whether disease will be present in the body, or a closed system present in an organization. They will be. The issue is what the response of the body or organization will be to the presence of a threat to its health – how it will be managed. "When an organism's balance fails to some degree, or when the organism remains in a state of instability for too long a time, it is sick. When the whole process fails, the organism dies....Health is the ability of a living system to respond to a wide assortment of challenges to its integrity."[37] The kind of leadership that is exhibited will

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[36] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations,* vii-viii.
[37] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations*, viii.

determine the direction and fate of the organization. "More important….than any of the *conditions* they face is the capacity of their leaders to make clear and effective *responses* to the conditions."[38] Ultimately, the issue that faces leaders of the corporate collective, as well as of us as individuals, is what the response will be to the stimuli that the Lord allows to come our way. His call is to bring all that confronts us to Him, and by so doing to trust His will and way in the midst of it. That is the challenge of life; and the possibility that is available via an Open System. The Open System is the most advantageous and best possible system because it is *open*. "A healthy congregation is one that actively and responsively addresses or heals its disturbances, not one with an absence of troubles"[39] How we *deal with* the stuff of life makes all the difference. Will that be within a healthy or a sick system? "Health is 10 percent what happens and 90 percent how we respond."[40] An Open System can openly respond to the threats and challenges of life. The only other option is a closed system, which is to deny or dismiss the presence of what is present, which is to choose disease, sickness, and ultimately death. An Open System offers an ingredient of hope in the midst of threat. Facing truth provides momentum toward redemption. Lemons indeed *can* be turned into lemonade. That is the Gospel.

<center>An Open System - what it <u>*IS*</u></center>

As was established and presented in chapter one, an Open System offers that which is not present in a closed system. It is the polar opposite of a closed system.

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[38] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations*, 26.
[39] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations*, 10.
[40] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations*, 17.

Living in Florida, we have a lengthy growing season. Something is always blooming, budding, or sprouting; both that which is desired, as well as that which is not – weeds, for instance. It best antidote to weeds is a vibrant, healthy, lush lawn. Doing the right thing for the grass will take care of the weed problem. The focus needs to be on the grass, not the weeds. There is an analogy here to systems. Focusing on the creation and maintenance of an Open System will promote health. And in so doing, will also address the issues that are generic to a closed system.

An Open System is what the name implies – open. The glimpse at systems thinking in this chapter's opening section simultaneously endorsed an Open System. As was established in chapter one, and affirmed in chapter two, the presence of an Open System is necessary for a redemptive culture. You cannot have one without the other. An Open System is a system that not only welcomes and affirms participation, it is dependent upon participation.

In an Open System, COMMUNICATION is collaborative; and dialogue is preferred over discussion. In an Open System, the team is regarded as a rich resource. *Collaboration* is a natural by-product of valuing the team. The varied perspectives that a wide reaching team brings to the table is considered advantageous in an Open System. Varying perspectives are solicited, mined, and included in the decision making process. Just as "many hands make light work", so too do many minds create a better forum in which creativity, innovation, and wise decision making take place. "….teams must learn how to tap the potential for many minds to be more intelligent than one mind."[41] "The learning culture must be built on the assumption that communication and information are

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[41] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline,* 236.

central to organizational well-being and must therefore create a multi-channel communication system that allows everyone to connect to everyone else."[42]

As has been established thus far in this chapter, an Open System best meets the changing business and ministry climate. People are welcomed and affirmed for their diversity and heterogeneity. "The size and intricacy of organizations, the proliferation of critical information, and the increasing complexity of tasks make connection and cooperation - social capital - increasingly important......Manufacturing, assembly line required some level of trust, respect, and generalized reciprocity......Little of the work of today's knowledge firm is repetitive or mechanical. It requires responsiveness, inventiveness, collaboration, and attention."[43] Collaboration helps to create an organizational culture and system in which freedom of expression is encouraged.

Collaboration produces a win/win result - the organization and its people are involved and ignited through widespread participation. Collaboration provides a lens through which the organization can see the dangers existing within and without. "Teams play a central role in the knowledge-creating company because they provide a shared context where individuals can interact with each other and engage in the constant dialogue on which effective reflection depends. Team members create new points of view through dialogue and discussion. They pool their information and examine it from various angles. Eventually, they integrate their diverse individual perspectives into a new collective perspective."[44] "Without the sense of community that comes from interacting

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[42] Edgar J. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership,* 3d ed. (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2004), 400.
[43] Don Cohen and Laurence Prusak, *In Good Company: How Social Capital Makes Organizations Work* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2001), 16-17.
[44] Ikujiro Nonaka, *Harvard Business Review on Knowledge Management* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 1998), 44.

with peers, it is tougher to be involved in your organization's operations, and tougher to feel engaged."[45]

Peter Senge refers to the work of David Bohm, a leading quantum theorist, regarding the difference and interplay between *dialogue* and discussion. "There are two primary types of discourse, dialogue and discussion. ...'discussion' has the same root as percussion and concussion. It suggests something like a 'Ping-Pong game where we are hitting the ball back and forth between us.'....The purpose of the game is to win and in this case winning means to have one's views accepted by the group.....By contrast with discussion, the word 'dialogue' comes from the Greek *dialogos*. *Dia* means through. *Logos* means the word, or more broadly, the meaning....In dialogue, a group accesses a larger 'pool of common meaning,' which cannot be accessed individually...The purpose of a dialogue is to go beyond any one individual's understanding....In dialogue, individuals gain insights that simply could not be achieved individually."[46] If truth and insight into problem areas or topics of discussion is a value, then dialogue is necessary. In a dialogue, rank, role, position, responsibility, and power are set aside in favor of collective thinking. In order for this to happen, the 'principle of the loose grip' is necessary.

Each of us has insights and understandings regarding life, work, and ministry. I have mine, you have yours. Neither of us has a corner on the truth. In order for either party to enter into conversation, in order for *dialogue* to take place, it is necessary for us to set aside our respective perspectives. *Keeping a loose grip* on the degree of truth that

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[45] Gebauer and Lowman, *Closing the Engagement Gap,* 172.
[46] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline,* 240-241.

we each have is necessary to hear the other. Suspending our stranglehold on what we regard as truth is in order. This is the principle of the loose grip.

There is most certainly a time and place for both dialogue and discussion. "In a discussion, decisions are made. In a dialogue, complex issues are explored."[47] Most people prefer discussion in the majority of situations, even when exploring issues is the agenda. Discussion is what we prefer because we are most comfortable when we are in control. An Open System is one in which *dialogue rather than discussion* is the preferred way of communication, especially when issues are being explored. The welcome center is open for the exchange of ideas. Innovation is rewarded. Learning rather than indoctrination, information rather than propaganda are the goals. It is a safe environment in which ideas and opinions are rewarded. "In healthy congregations, information flows freely."[48] "We need to build a safe place where these dangerous truths can surface. We need to make it okay to question, wonder, and reflect....People in the work place are starved for meaningful exchanges of truthful information, and they long to share their wildest ideas with people who care to listen and to affirm them. Sadly, there is a real lack of honest exchanges in companies."[49] And sadly, too often lacking in ministries, as well.

In an Open System, RELATIONSHIPS are collegial; inclusivity is valued; and people are esteemed beyond their utilitarian purposes. This echoes what was established in Table 1 in chapter one. "Everything alive lives in some sort of environment and interacts with it. For people an important part of any environment is other people."[50] We are created to be in Community, to be together, to be in relationship. We experience

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[47] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline,* 247.
[48] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations,* 9.
[49] Carucci, *Leadership Divided,* 59, 64.
[50] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations,* 7.

relationships and seek social interaction in all spheres of life; the professional setting is no different than the personal. We engage others for connection, support, and a sense of belonging. The issue is not whether relationships will exist; relationships are a given. Rather, the issue is how those relationships will impact us personally, and how they will develop and contribute to the culture, system, and organization. Relationships require investing in others. Investing time, energy, and attention in *who* they are as well as in *what* they can accomplish. "Leadership is not something one does *to* someone else. Rather, it is something one does *with* someone else."[51] In an Open System, people development is an objective equal in importance to the mission, vision, and goals; the people of the organization are part of the plan. An Open System defines a way of relating, a way of operating, and a way of life. "Our philosophy is that *quality relationships produce quality products.*"[52]

A relationship culture that puts a premium on communication, that includes collaboration and dialogue, leads quite naturally to *collegiality.* Collegiality refers to the elements of power and position in relationships. Collegiality is the result of power and authority being set aside in favor of equality. A familiar setting is the Roman Catholic Church, wherein Bishops share power equally; they are colleagues. When collegiality is present, individual position and status is waived in favor of mutual regard and respect. Co-workers are regarded as teammates, as partners, as respected equals. Interdependence, rather than independence, is valued. "Employees become allies in solving problems, spotting opportunities, and moving the company forward, to the benefit of all. And when managers decide to let their employees think alongside them –

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[51] Carucci, *Leadership Divided,* 15.
[52] Lundin and Lundin, *The Healing Manager,* 19.

and no longer seek to go it alone -- they will have joined the Idea Revolution."[53] "In a healthy culture, we see colleagues engaged with one another, focused on creating the future together, and collaborating and synergizing with one another to grow on a personal and organizational level."[54] When co-workers are regarded as colleagues, they are seen as associates, not as foes; partners rather than contestants. Encountering others in a spirit of cooperation and equality creates partnerships rather than competitions.

In a collegial environment the organization, *as well as* those individuals who compose it, is served to a much higher degree than if they were to go it alone. A convergence of needs is accomplished. When co-workers are regarded as opponents, they are so regarded only to the degree that they are perceived to be such in the minds of those who view them that way. Collegiality changes the perspective from regarding the other as 'one of them' to 'one of us'. An Open System encourages those within it to see co-workers as colleagues, in the same huddle, accomplishing together what they could not separately. "The key to such a system (information-based) is that everyone asks: Who in this organization depends on me for what information? And on whom, in turn, do I depend? Each person's list will always include superiors and subordinates. But the most important names on it will be those of colleagues, people with whom one's primary relationship is coordination."[55]

When collaboration and collegiality are joined, *inclusivity* will be the coagulant. The three flow into and out of each other. Collaboration invites others to the table of dialogue and decision making. Collegiality places others on equal footing with oneself, and extends a hand of welcome to others to join the circle. Inclusivity is at the heart of

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[53] Robinson and Schroeder, *Ideas Are Free,* 28.
[54] Glaser, *Creating WE,* 21.
[55] Drucker, *Harvard Business Review,* 10-11.

what is accomplished by collaboration and collegiality. When these three are present, people are regarded for who they are as well as for what they bring to the table. "What I am describing in this book is an inclusive fellowship model of leadership that builds a community of leaders rather than a system of servitude to an authority figure."[56] "It seems clear that the leader of the future must be a perpetual learner, which will require…..the willingness and ability to involve others and elicit their participation."[57]

Trust is built as leaders see those they lead as human, as more than their utilitarian value to the organization. Inclusivity operates from the principles of inviting others into the fellowship, of removing barriers that separate people, and of including them in the process once they are seated. "It all starts with you [the leader]. You influence the power dynamics in your organization. When you create a sense of community and inclusion, colleagues feel they are trusted, accepted, and valued and they will strive to live up to that higher level of performance."[58] "….Radical trust leaders break down walls. They encourage all players to be eager to partner with whomever necessary to grow and execute at higher levels."[59] "Overwhelmingly, they [his clients] say that trust, in fact, is the single biggest contributor to a high-performance team and agree that lack of trust is the single biggest reason for dysfunctions on teams."[60]

In an Open System, the operations or FUNCTIONS are flexible and malleable; the perspective, world view, and way of thinking are dynamic rather than static. It was established above on page 80 and following pages that closed systems are rigid systems. The way in which the component parts function in an Open System is the antithesis of

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[56] Glaser, *Creating WE,* 62.
[57] Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership,* 3d ed., 418.
[58] Glaser, *Creating WE,* 179.
[59] Healey, *Radical Trust,* 43.
[60] Healey, *Radical Trust,* 13.

rigidity. There is cooperation and coordination within the ingredients of the system. There is flexibility regarding the way communication and relationships are pursued. An Open System does not seek itself. Rather, an Open System seeks truth and objectivity. The pathway to uncovering truth is to be flexible, open to change. The perspective regarding traditions, ways and means of operation, policies, and procedures is open when there is an effort to seek what is best for the organization in realizing its mission and developing its people.

The approach taken in an Open System is to honor the existing systems and programs for the contributions they have made to the organization. However, in an Open System there are no sacred cows. What has gone before is placed not in cement but in water. Systems, traditions, and procedures are not rooted and immovable, but alive and growing. The traditions that are present today are regarded as catalysts and springboards for the evolution of the way the organization may function tomorrow.

Cultures by their very nature are stable, predictable, and established. Hence, cultural change is accomplished glacially. As we've seen, an Open System, by its nature, is dynamic, unpredictable, and malleable. When an Open System is present within a culture, the functioning of that culture will be flexible and open to change. It must be so: "All living forms are endangered when they lack flexibility....To live well, an organism [organization] must adapt to the changes of the environment in which it lives."[61] The dinosaurs became extinct due to a lack of ability to adjust to a changing environment. So it is with organizations and ministries. Those that are mired in tradition and past ways of functioning, with a rigid mindset that opposes and resists forward movement and change,

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[61] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations,* 69.

are those organizations and ministries that are in jeopardy of finding themselves in the graveyard of dreams and visions.

Senge stresses the need for flexibility and change through what he terms "mental models". "'Mental models' are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action."[62] Synonyms of mental models include world view, assumptions, or perspective. The way in which we view and interpret the stimuli that comes our way is determined by the way in which we see the world – our mental models, our world view, our perspective. Our world view determines both what we see and how we will act upon what we see. An example: if one's world view of women comes from a more conservative, narrow minded perspective, then women are likely to be viewed in a more utilitarian way. They are confined or suited to certain roles in life, as well as inferior and subservient to men. This will, in turn, shape one's treatment of women in the workplace – eligible for certain positions and not others, inferiorly compensated when compared to men performing the same tasks, and on unequal standing with men in discussions, decision making, etc. Our world view extends to and includes all of life's issues – creation, gender, race, ability, effectiveness, quality, work ethic, conflict, etc. Our world view shapes our attitudes, opinions, prejudices, preferences, ideas, and level of flexibility. Changing our world view will change what we perceive, how we perceive it, and what we do with what we've seen. "Only by changing how we think can we change deeply embedded policies and practices….We have a deep tendency to see the changes we need to make as being in our outer world, not in our inner world. It is challenging to think that while we redesign the manifest structure of our organizations, we must also redesign the internal structures of

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[62] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline,* 8.

our 'mental models' "[63] Taking this a step further, and bringing the light of scripture to bear on this subject, changed must not be confined to minds. Mental change is not sufficient in the redemptive culture. It is changed hearts, souls, and strength as well as minds that is called for when Jesus comes on the scene (Mark 1:15). That is what leads to repentance and redemption.

A key component of one's world view is how the nature and condition of mankind is regarded. "Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) in their classic comparative study noted that in some societies humans are seen as basically evil, in others as basically good, and in still others as mixed or neutral, capable of being either good or bad."[64] This is extended into the workplace, and evidences itself in how employees are viewed. "McGregor (1960) observed that…ineffective managers tended to hold an interlocked set of assumptions that McGregor labeled Theory X. Theory X managers assumed that people are lazy and must therefore by motivated with economic incentives and controlled by constant surveillance. In contrast, effective managers held a different set of assumptions that he labeled Theory Y. These managers assumed that people are basically self-motivated and therefore need to be challenged and channeled, not controlled."[65] Add to Theory X and Y a third possibility – that people are who they are at a point in time, be it lazy or motivated, but also malleable, redeemable, and capable of change. Whichever of these three assumptions regarding the nature of people is dominant in one's world view will influence the way that others are seen, responded to, and led. "If managers 'believe' their world views are facts rather than sets of assumptions, they will not be open to challenging those world views. If they lack skills in inquiring into their and others'

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[63] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline,* xiv-xv.
[64] Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership,* 3d ed., 171-172.
[65] Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership,* 3d ed., 172-173.

way of thinking, they will be limited in experimenting collaboratively with new ways of thinking."[66] The body follows the head.

When thinking is open, world views are in a position to be challenged and altered. An Open System and redemptive culture are in evidence when people are encouraged, believed in, and affirmed for their giftedness; and are welcomed to bring to the table their unique world view and perspectives. A system in which the world view is dynamic and fluid contributes to an Open System of function. When that occurs, there is a joining of concept and function, a linking of belief and behavior, and coordination and cooperation between the ingredients of the system.

Summary

Robert K. Greenleaf, in *Servant Leadership,* suggests that the best test of leadership is this: "Do those served grow as persons. Do they, *while being served,* become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?"[67] This is equally applicable as regards an Open System of communication, relationship, and function. Do those who are in an Open System themselves become more like the ingredients and foundational premises of the system – collaborative, collegial, inclusive, and relational communicators with a redemptive world view? In short, are they on the road to redemption, and are they offering redemptive possibilities to those they lead?

What really matters in life comes from the inside out - redemption, character, and transformation are all developed on the inside. They cannot be forced on another person.

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[66] Senge, *The Fifth Discipline,* 203.

[67] Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1977), 13.

Each one of us has to choose this day both whom we will serve, as well as what we will give ourselves to. The utmost that a leader can accomplish for another person are these two things – (1) to create a setting in which what matters is present and functional; and, (2), invite the other to participate. Max DePree, retired CEO of Herman Miller, in his book *Leadership is an Art* speaks to this. "Leaders owe the organization a new reference point for what caring, purposeful, committed people can be in the institutional setting. Notice I did not say what people can do – what we can do is merely a consequence of what we can be.....Contractual relationships cover such things as expectations, objectives, compensation, working conditions, benefits.....But more is needed – particularly today when the majority of us who work can properly be classified as volunteers (we have *chosen* to work for this organization). Volunteers do not need contracts; they need covenants.....A covenantal relationship rests on shared commitment to ideas, to issues, to values, to goals, and to management processes.....They fill deep needs and they enable work to have meaning and to be fulfilling. Covenantal relationships reflect unity and grace and poise. They are an expression of the sacred nature of relationships."[68]

The sacred and the secular are becoming increasingly distinct as litigation and the world seek to divide the two. However, those who work do so for more than wages and benefits. Something of our souls gets invested as we produce widgets. The big picture that we are accomplishing, the mission, matters. But the mission is joined in the equation by who/what we are becoming, who we share the trenches with, and how we are accomplishing the mission and vision. When it gets down to it, redemption is what our souls long for. Redemption has to do with, at least in part, facing what *is*; and dealing

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[68] Max DePree, *Leadership is an Art* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 12, 25, 51.

with it. Jesus said, "The truth will set you free" (John 8:32). When truth is ignored, or the access to it is blocked or hindered, beware! There can be no freedom, and neither can there be redemption. Just as "where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (II Cor 3:17), so too where there is an Open System of communication, relationship, and function, there is the possibility that a redemptive culture may emerge.

The next chapter will be a retrospective look at the establishment of an Open System, which contributed to a redemptive culture, at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Jacksonville, Florida.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY: A RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
AN OPEN SYSTEM AT GORDON-CONWELL IN JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

Introduction

The project of this thesis-project is a retrospective analysis of the establishment of

an Open System at GCTS/Jax. The importance of an Open System was established in

chapter one, the Biblical/Theological rationale was established in chapter two, and the

literature review supporting an Open System was presented in chapter three. Chapter

four will study an Open System at the Jacksonville extension site of Gordon-Conwell.

Surveys, interviews, documents, as well as the recollections and reflections of the author

will be the means used.

Case Study as a Methodology

A Case Study, simply stated, is the use of a factual description of an event or

situation (the case) for purposes of analysis and study. Case studies have a common

purpose: "to represent reality, to convey a situation with all its cross currents and rough

edges – including irrelevancies, sideshows, misconceptions, and little information or an

over-whelming amount of it."[1] A situation is studied and dissected for the purpose of

determining the what, why, and how of that which took place. Cases are intended to

present data, which while being examined, creates questions in the mind of the reader.

The purpose is to move beyond the *what* of that which took place to the *why* of that

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[1] William Ellet, *The Case Study Handbook: How to Read, Discuss, and Write Persuasively About Cases* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2007), 13.

which took place and *how* the reader might have addressed or resolved the situation.[2] By examining the case, conclusions and principles will be gleaned that might be applicable to understanding or establishing future situations of similar scope. "The discipline of writing a case (study) requires us as presenters to recognize, describe in detail, and reflect on a particular incident in our own ministry. This specificity seems to open greater possibilities for self-discovery and potential for growth than do more general discussions of "issues" in ministry."[3]

The case method, which includes case studies, can be dated to the 1800's as a pedagogical methodology. Harvard Business School has been using cases since the early 1900's.[4] The value for both the teacher and the student is in the reflective process, wherein theory and practice are integrated around problem solving.[5] It is important in case studies that the data collected and examined is from real-life situations. "By definition of the North American Case Research Association and many other groups of case writers, including the authors of this book, a case is a description of a *real* situation."[6] "A 'case', in the Harvard Business School tradition, is a write-up of an actual situation. It provides all the narrative and documentary data needed to enter vicariously into a problem."[7]

As can be seen, one of the primary values of the case method is its practicality. Since the events, the people, the decisions, and the results are from the real world rather

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[2] Jack Rogers and Ross Mackenzie and Louis Weeks. *Case Studies in Christ and Salvation* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977), 8.

[3] Jeffrey H Mahan and others, *Shared Wisdom: A Guide to Case Study Reflection in Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 14.

[4] William Naumes and Margaret J. Naumes, *The Art & Craft of Case Writing*, 2d ed. (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), 4.

[5] Joann Keyton and Pamela Shocklye-Zalabak, *Case Studies for Organizational Communication: Understanding Communication Processes* (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2004), 1.

[6] Naumes and Naumes, *The Art & Craft of Case Writing*, 9.

[7] Rogers et al. *Case Studies in Christ and Salvation*, 7.

than from the theoretical, the implications and conclusions drawn are practical. What occurred was real, not imagined. What is gleaned from the exercise, therefore, is equally as real and can be practically applied. The case study is a real-life laboratory.

This case study will be a single-case, retrospective study. A single case refers to it being a lone study, as opposed to a sampling of multiple cases (referred to as a *cross-case*)[8]. A retrospective study, by definition, is a look backward at events that have already occurred. The events, activity, and outcomes are known. Retrospective case studies look at events and activities that occurred over a defined time frame. Those events and activities are examined within a systematic approach – the data is gathered and collected; the data is analyzed; and the results are reported. The data for this case study is based on the following sources: recollections of the author, who became involved in the effort in January 2004, less than a year after the initial interest meeting (March 2003); interviews with the original Exploratory Committee; interviews with faculty and administrators at GCTS/Charlotte that were intimately involved in the development and formation of the extension site in Jacksonville; and information collected from an anonymous survey distributed to a cross section of those participating in and impacted by the extension site, principally students.

With this as a backdrop, we move now onto the case study of an Open System of communication, relationship, and function at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (GCTS) in Jacksonville, FL.

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[8] John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 20.

Historical Background and Setting of GCTS

GCTS was established in 1969 through the bringing together and merging of Gordon Divinity School and the Conwell School of Theology. The Conwell School of Theology dates to 1884 when Rev. Russell Conwell, pastor of Grace Baptist Temple in Philadelphia, began tutoring sessions out of his study. These classes prompted members of the congregation to establish a school which was called Temple College, which grew into Temple University in 1907. Conwell's original vision was to establish a school that was progressive, orthodox theologically, Biblically centered, and simultaneously in close touch with the modern culture. His desire was to provide education for young men and women who had the mental aptitude and a will to work. When the State of Pennsylvania took over control of the school, the theology school became the department of religion. Dr. Billy Graham and J. Howard Pew were among those who hoped to preserve the school's original vision by establishing the Conwell School of Theology in 1960.[9]

During that same late nineteenth century time frame, in 1889 to be exact, the Rev. Adoniram J. Gordon, pastor of Boston's Clarendon Street Baptist Church, was led to found the Boston Missionary Training Institute on Boston's north shore. His heart and vision were to evangelize the lost and to provide an environment in which men and women would be trained for Christian service in a setting that was "undenominational, broadly evangelical, practical, spiritual, humble and unworldly, and consecrated to the benefit of the 'Regions Beyond'. The school would be a place 'of equipping men and

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[9] Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Campus Viewbook 2010-11, Our Heritage. http://www.gordonconwell.edu/prospectivestudents/southhamiltonadmissions (accessed January 2011).

women in practical religious work and furnishing them with a thoroughly Biblical training.'"[10]

This detailing of the vision behind the founding and establishment of both schools is significant because the vision that later inspired the creation of GCTS encompassed and paralleled the foundational roots of both. And continues to be the bedrock of the institution to this day – "Rooted in the gospel and God's Word, the seminary seeks to develop Christian leaders who are thoughtful, globally aware, spiritually mature and ready for a broad array of ministries."[11]

Fast forward nearly eighty years. As Dr. Billy Graham's evangelistic ministry came to prominence in the mid-1960's, the impact of the crusades was including more than conversions to the faith. Partnering as they were with local churches to conduct the crusades, the division and independent nature of denominations and individual churches was evident.

Dr. Graham and Dr. Harold J. Ockenga, the pastor of Park Street Church in Boston, began to discuss the need for an inter-denominational, evangelical seminary on the east coast to compliment what Fuller Theological Seminary was accomplishing on the west coast. "Their vision was for an institution 'established within a strong evangelical framework, an independent, interdenominational seminary whose constituents are united in the belief that the Bible is the infallible, authoritative word of God, consecrated to educating men and women in all facets of gospel outreach.'"[12] The objective was to

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[10] Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Campus Viewbook 2010-11, Our Heritage.
http://www.gordonconwell.edu/prospectivestudents/southhamiltonadmissions (accessed January 2011).
[11] Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Campus Viewbook 2010-11, Welcome.
http://www.gordonconwell.edu/prospectivestudents/southhamiltonadmissions (accessed January 2011).
[12] Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Campus Viewbook 2010-11, Our Heritage.
http://www.gordonconwell.edu/prospectivestudents/southhamiltonadmissions (accessed January 2011).

realize the goal of training seminarians for ministry in a context that included and welcomed diverging doctrinal and theological viewpoints. The resulting environment would sharpen students academically (Prov. 27:17 - "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another"), as well as build bridges between students representing diverse denominations around the common ground of the Gospel.

Dr. Graham and Dr. Ockenga drew philanthropist J. Howard Pew, of the Sun Oil Foundation, into the conversation (Graham and Pew having worked together in establishing Conwell School of Theology as mentioned on page 107). The product was the establishment of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 1969. A Carmelite seminary near South Hamilton, MA, on Boston's north shore, was purchased to house the residential seminary and administrative offices. Dr. Ockenga served as the first President of Gordon-Conwell from 1969 until 1979.

In 1991-92, two branch campuses were established. CUME (Center for Urban Ministerial Education) was located in the Roxbury section of Boston, MA; and Gordon-Conwell in Charlotte, NC was established to serve the Southeastern United States. The Charlotte campus would serve a clientele that was principally composed of adult learners, those who were either presently engaged in ministry or had experienced a call to ministry and seminary preparation while working in the secular sector. This resulted in the utilization of an integrative approach to learning that took advantage of weekend classes, distance courses, and week-long intensive classes.

Historical Background: GCTS/Jacksonville

On the evening of March 17, 2003, at the behest of the Rev. Dr. Robert L. Morris, twenty-seven clergy and lay persons from across Jacksonville, representing numerous denominational lines, gathered for an interest and organizational meeting. Also present were Dr. and Mrs. Walter Kaiser, fifth president of GCTS, and Dr. Sid Bradley, Dean of the Charlotte campus for GCTS. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the possibility of, and ingredients necessary for, the establishment of a fourth GCTS location, an extension site of the Charlotte campus in Jacksonville.

The genesis of this meeting occurred the previous fall when Rev. Dr. Morris initiated a conversation with Dr. Kaiser while both attended the dedication of the Frank & Morrow Graham Center that houses the library, classrooms, and administrative offices of the Charlotte campus. Their conversation centered on the vision that Rev. Dr. Morris felt was God-led for a seminary in Jacksonville, the town in which he was born and raised. He had returned to Jacksonville in the fall of 2000 to pastor the First Presbyterian Church in downtown Jacksonville. Although he had completed his Master of Divinity degree at Princeton Theological Seminary, Rev. Dr. Morris had earned his Doctor of Ministry degree at Gordon-Conwell in South Hamilton. His desire for an interdenominational seminary, along with his favorable experience at GCTS, led him to explore the possibilities with Dr. Kaiser. Their conversation propelled Rev. Dr. Morris toward the next step, the aforementioned meeting in March of 2003.

That meeting launched an Exploratory Committee, the initial task of which was to issue an official letter of invitation, dated May 1, 2003, requesting that the seminary

leadership and Board explore the possibility of an extension site in Jacksonville (Appendix 1). This was signed by twenty-eight clergy and lay leaders.

The seminary response to this was an action from the Board of Trustees requesting that the President's office develop a business plan regarding the possibility of an extension site in Jacksonville. This resulted in the production of an Educational and Business Plan (Appendix 3), which was to be presented to the Board of Trustees at their May 2004 meeting. The principle efforts taking place in Jacksonville during the fall of 2003 and spring of 2004 centered on drafting and finalizing a Prospectus (Appendix 2), which would detail the need and feasibility of a seminary in Northeast Florida. Among other items mentioned in the document was the fact that no accredited, evangelical theological seminary existed between Atlanta to the north (300 miles) and Orlando to the south (135 miles). The team was also meeting with pastors, civic officials, and ministry leaders across North Florida and Southeast Georgia, soliciting their support and endorsement for the extension site. A time line of April 2004 was established for submission of the document to the institution, which would provide the Board of Trustees ample time to review and offer a response at their May 2004 meeting. Initial fund raising also commenced, with an excess of $18,000 being raised in two months' time.

As the Educational and Business Plan was being drafted, an institutional master plan was developed and distributed. This suggested the possibility of multiple extension sites from Canada to Florida along the east coast. This raised red flags among numerous members of the South Hamilton faculty, chief of which centered on the deleterious impact such an ambitious expansion might have on faculty, as well as a concern for the institution's ability to provide consistent academic excellence from a distance. However,

on April 26, 2004, the faculty voted to support the pursuit of an extension site in Jacksonville.

At the Board meeting ten days later, an "eleventh hour" item was inserted into the agenda which would supersede the Jacksonville proposal. A donor had come forward with the offer of a building for the CUME campus. In addition to the obvious importance and urgency of this proposal, this also surfaced latent and unresolved issues that existed among some on the Board and faculty. GCTS/Charlotte, established in the same year as CUME (1992), had moved into a new building in 2002, while CUME continued to utilize a pilgrim model for classroom, library, and offices (utilizing borrowed space from churches and businesses). Dealing with the objective and subjective components of this issue became the top order of priority at the meeting and in the process drew considerable attention away from the Jacksonville proposal. Although the Jacksonville proposal was discussed, it was done so with extreme brevity. The decision made regarding the Jacksonville proposal was to study it in committee and consider it at the October 2004 Board meeting.

The October 2004 Board meeting had an unexpected agenda item, as well. Dr. Kaiser announced his retirement effective June 30, 2006, twenty months distant. Once again, the Jacksonville proposal was delayed by more pressing institutional issues. The proposal was touched on during the final session on the last day of the meeting, but the Board decision was to table the proposal for a second time, until the January 2005 meeting.

In the minds of many in Jacksonville, the prospects for approval in January 2005 were fleeting. A meeting was called in December 2004 to respond to the October Board

meeting decision. It would be a defining moment for the effort. A variety of sentiments were voiced, including contacting other seminaries. The team decided to stay the course, the determination being that a decision regarding the proposal had been delayed not denied.

Given all that had taken place in 2004, the decision rendered at the January 14, 2005 Board meeting was fairly unexpected by the Exploratory Committee in Jacksonville. At that meeting, the Board of Trustees "resolved, that subject to the accomplishment of the standards established in 'Approval of Extension Sites', the Administration is authorized to proceed with the establishment of the Jacksonville extension site, which will continue so long as the standard criteria/standards for an extension site are met."[13] These standards spelled out the standards and criteria for the establishment of not only the Jacksonville site, but extension site possibilities into the future. This six page document, entitled "Growth with Strength: Extension Site Criteria", was included in the Board meeting minutes (Appendix 4). It was also resolved that Jacksonville would be an extension of the Charlotte campus, and would be managed by Dr. Sid Bradley, the Dean in Charlotte.

The Jacksonville team responded by requesting a meeting to clarify the terms and expectations, as well as to establish and define the next steps. This took place on March 12, 2004. Present representing GCTS were Drs. Kaiser and Bradley, and Alan Cellamare, the Director of Development in Charlotte. Fourteen attended from the Jacksonville team. In addition to providing an apologetic for the process of Board approval, terms of the Criteria were discussed, as well as the logistics and details – the timetable for classes, initial Jacksonville personnel, curriculum/degrees, faculty/adjuncts,

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[13] Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes, January 14, 2005.

role of the EC, fund raising, and student procurement. The Jacksonville team met a week later, unanimously voting to accept the terms and invitation from the seminary to put the pieces in place to establish an extension site in Jacksonville.

At the March 12 meeting, a June 1, 2005 timeframe was adopted to review progress that was being made toward the fund raising goal of $75,000 for year one and the goal to recruit a cohort of thirty students. By June 1, $105,000 in pledges had been secured, and forty-two prospective student candidates had been identified.

In August 2005, Kent Gilbert was hired as Assistant to the Dean to serve as the right hand person to Dr. Bradley in developing the Jacksonville Site, as well as to provide leadership to the team in Jacksonville. The goal was to put the necessary pieces in place for a February 2006 start of classes. The lead-up activities included a Roll Out luncheon in September 2005, as well as two Ockenga seminars during the fall of 2005 and one in early spring 2006. On Friday, February 10, 2006, the first class commenced at the Jacksonville Extension Site. Forty-eight students had been accepted, of which forty-four were enrolled for one or both of the two classes offered during the spring semester 2006: Church History from the Reformation, taught by Dr. Garth Rosell; and Foundations for Leadership, taught by Dr. Wayne Goodwin.

It was out of this history and background that the Jacksonville Extension Site was established; and that an Open System of communication, relationship, and function would emerge.

Case Study: An Open System in Jacksonville

As has been established in chapters one through three, an Open System is the optimum system in which redemption occurs in an organization. In chapter one, it was established that when individuals gather and form a *group*, that group will form a *culture*. The culture, in turn, will dictate to a large degree not only what is produced, and how; but more importantly, it will also determine the impact on those involved....*who* is produced by the organization.[14] If a redemptive impact is desired, it follows that a redemptive culture is necessary. "Culture has to do with certain values that managers are trying to inculcate in their organization....Culture is to a group what personality or character is to an individual....Just as our personality and character guide and constrain our behavior, so does culture guide and constrain the behavior of members of a group through the shared norms that are held in that group."[15] The type of culture present within an organization is crucial to who will be produced.

The culture that emerges in an organization is also intrinsically connected to the system of communication, relationship, and function present. An Open System is the optimum system for redemption to take place.[16] An Open System is one that affirms and accepts people into it, encourages participation, invites exchange of ideas, rewards innovation, and welcomes diversity. An Open System promotes learning rather than indoctrination, provides a safe environment where people are valued, creates a setting of genuineness and trust, and is an atmosphere that provides the freedom to express and

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[14] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership.* 3d ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 7.
[15] Schein, 3d ed., 7-8.
[16] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 1985), 7.

grow further into the unique person that God has constructed, and even willed, within each of us.

In chapter two, which demonstrated that an Open System is consistent with a Biblical and theological perspective, it was established that the nature and function of the Trinity includes an Open System.[17] Creation, as an extension of the nature and image of the Trinity, is imbued with the ingredients of an Open System, particularly in regards to unity, fellowship, and free will.[18] The possibility for Man rejecting God's will and way is evidence of an Open System, as are the accompanying consequences of that disobedience and the plan for salvation and redemption.[19] Jesus embodied an Open System as He lived in and ministered to a fallen world.[20] The Apostle Paul personified an Open System as he evangelized, discipled, and developed the early church (I Thess 2:7-8).[21] The Early Church, in turn, lived as a community, with openness being the modus operandi regarding daily living, and how they dealt with issues and conflicts.[22]

In chapter three, an Open System was shown to be the prevalent mindset and espoused model among many leaders in the business and ministry communities. Systems thinking, with an emphasis on the interconnection and interrelation of the component parts of an organization, is fraught with Open System principles: collaboration, collegiality, inclusiveness, dialogue, and flexibility.[23]

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[17] L Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), 84.
[18] Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology, Volume One,* Abridged ed. (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1988), 339.
[19] Chafer, *Systematic Theology,* 365 .
[20] Gordon D. Fee, *News International Commentary on the New Testament: Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 197.
[21] Ralph P. Martin, *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians – An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), 133.
[22] William J. Larkin, *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series: Acts* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 81-82.
[23] Peter L. Steinke, *Healthy Congregations: A systems Approach* (Alban Institute, Inc., 1996), 6.

The essential evidence that a system is an Open System, as presented in chapters one through three, would therefore include the following: (1) Communication is open, inclusive, and collaborative; with the free exchange of ideas not only welcomed but solicited; (2) Relationships build trust, are collegial, develop group unity, create safe vulnerability, and deal with issues and conflict openly; and (3) the organizational Function can be described as responsive, flexible, malleable, and adaptive.

Evidences of an Open System in Jacksonville - Interviews with Exploratory and Advisory Committees

From one vantage point, what was taking place in Jacksonville was the activity and effort to secure an extension site, the history of which was sketched above. This would prove to be successful, as measured by Board approval in January 2005. However, as has been established in the previous three chapters, the *big picture* that was taking place was the creation of an organizational culture that would impact and help determine the redemptive possibilities that the extension site would have on the lives and souls of those participating, as well as on those who would come after. In that Gordon-Conwell did not previously exist in Jacksonville, neither a culture nor a system of communication, relationship, and function existed. What existed was a "Tabula Rosa" from which a culture and a system of communication, relationship, and function would be established.

Based on interviews done with the original Exploratory Committee (EC) and its successor, the Advisory Committee, the following are the primary ingredients that

contributed to the emerging culture and Open System of communication, relationship, and function:

The team in Jacksonville that convened to orchestrate the effort to pursue the extension site was the EC. The EC emerged from those who had attended one or more of the four meetings that took place in 2003. The membership of the group was voluntary, not hand selected. Participation was open to whoever had interest, and expressed that by continuing to attend and participate. From the outset in Jacksonville, the team sought to be diverse in as many aspects as possible – relating to gender, age, and denomination; as well as in regards to clergy/laity. The demographics of the twelve who composed the EC was as follows: ten of the twelve were local pastors; five had earned degrees from GCTS; five had significant relationships with existing GCTS faculty or administrators; and seven different denominations or ministries were represented. All were male, aged fifty and older. As the Extension Site developed, women were added onto the Advisory Committee, which the EC morphed into in January 2006. This diversity had been the ongoing intention of the Jacksonville team, which was also consistent with the desire of the seminary, as stated in the "Growth with Strength: Extension Site Criteria" document from the GCTS Board minutes of their January 2005 meeting.[24] As has been mentioned repeatedly in this thesis, Open Systems are diverse and inclusive.

The effort and the process took on the operating style of the initial leader, the Rev. Dr. Morris. Rev. Dr. Morris was not only the visionary that the Lord used to broach the idea with Dr. Kaiser and then call an interest meeting; his leadership set the tone, the heart, and the approach of the effort. All who joined the team were welcomed, listened

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[24] Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes, January 14, 2005.

to, and regarded. Active involvement and participation in discussions was solicited and encouraged. Ideas were welcomed and regarded, not censored. Encouragement was given to open dialogue that explored ideas while remaining focused on the vision. From the beginning, discussions were collaborative and decisions were collegial. When disputes surfaced, opposing ideas were heard, regarded and considered. Healthy discussion led to healthy resolution. Edgar Schein states that, "By definition, something can become part of the culture only if it works in the sense of making the organization successful and reducing the anxiety of the members."[25] Peter Steinke goes on to say that, "The people who are most in position to enhance the health of a congregation are precisely those who have been empowered to be responsible, namely the leaders. They are the chief stewards; they are the people who are willing to be accountable for the welfare of the congregation."[26] Leaders that are collegial, collaborative, welcome ideas from all corners, and value input from all – in short, are open – create a culture in which an Open System exists. Such was the case with the Jacksonville team.

The presence of a clear and focused vision contributed not only to the formation of the group but to the system that ensued. The EC formed around a shared cause; it owed its existence to accomplishing a well defined and clear objective - establishing an extension site of Gordon-Conwell in Jacksonville. While the EC *formed* around a vision, it *became a team* because of the way in which the vision and mission were accomplished. The commitments of the team were evident and operational from the onset, especially as regards to function – to Christ, to the group, to the process, and then to the goal….in that order.

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[25] Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership,* 3d ed., 230.

[26] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations*, vii.

Flowing from a shared vision was an approach that valued how the group and the process proceeded. *How* what was accomplished was given equal importance to *what* was accomplished. The unstated but clearly present approach was that *progress would be tied to the process.* The mission and the methodology were intertwined. Being a unified and united group was important to the team, as were inclusion and listening to each other.

An example of the system of communication, relationship, and function that existed emerged in the spring of 2004. As the EC was forming, Rev. Dr. Morris, Ed Hearle, and the author began meeting in between the larger group meetings to expedite and sculpt strategy. Ed was on the Board of Trustees for Trinity Evangelical Divinity School at the time, and had been part of Dr. Luder Whitlock's President's Council during the establishment of the Orlando campus for Reformed Theological Seminary. The trio became a compliment to the EC as they assumed the role of clarifying the agenda, implementing the decisions, and leading the larger group. Robert was the visionary and liaison with GCTS, Ed provided the expertise in governance strategy, while the author guided the day-to-day operations.

As the effort toward submitting a proposal to the Board gained momentum in the spring of 2004, the EC welcomed and granted a wide berth to this trio. To do this required a high level of trust between the three, as well as with the EC in regards to them. This suggests a commitment to function as a unified body. This, in turn, engendered trust. The result of trust was open communication, inclusive and collaborative relationships, and a system that functioned with flexibility and innovation. This is the approach of an effort or organization that is redeemed and is seeking to function redemptively. And is evidence of the presence of an Open System.

How an organization or group responds to circumstances and stimuli that come its way determines the growth and redemptive possibilities that will take place. "Health is the ability of a living system to respond to a wide assortment of challenges to its integrity."[27] Peter Senge states, "We have a deep tendency to see the changes we need to make as being in our outer world, not in our inner world. It is challenging to think that while we redesign the manifest structures of our organizations, we must also redesign the internal structures of our 'mental models'"[28]

As the approval process advanced, the team in Jacksonville became aware of, was impacted by, and was required to respond to the existence of tension that existed between South Hamilton and Charlotte.

When Gordon-Conwell/Charlotte was established in the early 1990's, the customary format for offering a seminary education was the residential campus community, like that found in South Hamilton. Students *went* to seminary. However, the Charlotte concept was designed to provide theological education to those who were unable or uninterested in re-locating to attend seminary. Hence, in Charlotte, the seminary *went* to the students. The adult learner was the principle student in Charlotte, with an average age of thirty-nine (as compared with an average age of twenty-six in South Hamilton). Class formats were centered on weekend, week-long intensive, and distance courses. The functioning within the classroom itself was a stark contrast to what one would experience at a residential campus. Students in Charlotte brought a wealth of life and ministry experience to the class room. That was included in the classroom as

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[27] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations*, viii.
[28] Senge, Peter M. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York, NY: Currency Doubleday, 1994), xv.

students were encouraged and even expected to enter into a collegial dialogue with each other and the professor.

While novel and distinct within the seminary, and serving a constituency that expanded the breadth and reach of the seminary, this approach to seminary education was viewed by some on the South Hamilton faculty as an inferior and questionably divergent model for offering seminary education. The resulting friction and ideological division within the institution became evident as the effort in Jacksonville interacted with representatives from the South Hamilton and Charlotte campuses.

This tension was evident but had minimal impact on the Jacksonville team until the pieces for a February 2006 launch of classes began to mobilize over the summer and fall of 2005. It was then that the effects of the tension resulting from the lack of a unified institution began to be felt by the Jacksonville effort.

When leadership is redemptive, the presence of dis-equilibration is a catalyst to accomplish its opposite – equilibration. Such was the case in Jacksonville. Crisis created opportunity. The team found it advantageous to meet frequently to clarify and interpret information that was coming from multiple sources within an institution that was struggling with leadership transition and issues of trust. This required and produced dialogue in Jacksonville that was open, honest, and transparent. This type of communication, in turn, led to the creation of relationships that required trust, vulnerability, and the commitment to deal with issues openly. Ingredients of an Open System were being exercised.

Evidences of an Open System in Jacksonville -
Survey with Students

A survey was conducted with current students at GCTS/Jax during the fall of 2010. At that point, the extension site had seventy active students (active being defined by the author as those having taken a class within the past three semesters). The survey was sent to those who had been taking classes for over a year (forty-six). The rationale for limiting the survey to those who had been with the seminary for a year or more was that this time frame would have provided them with adequate experience to provide an informed response to the questions being asked regarding the culture, communication, relationships, and function of the extension site. Of those, twenty responded.

It needs to be stated that two of the respondents consistently included answers that were divergent from and not consistent with the others. The point being that while their answers were no less valid that the others, they were in the extreme minority. Their experience could be interpreted as a "negative" experience regarding the categories covered, or at the least their experience with the extension site was not as complimentary as the other eighteen. This being said, the results of the survey overwhelmingly confirm the existence of an Open System. This conclusion is based on the following data:

The final question asked will be introduced first, as it provides an abstract of the results of the entire survey. Students were asked to "Describe the degree of (categories below) that you have experienced at GCTS/Jax." This is the lone question that came with a rating scale (the other eight questions were open ended, soliciting "essay-type" responses). The results of this question are posted below:

Table 2. Survey Results – Question #9

Category	Average Score
Collaboration	3.65
Unity	3.75
Trust	4.42
Rigidity	2.20
Flexibility	3.35
Inclusivity	3.75
Exclusivity	1.63
Openness	4.15
Closedness	1.55

The scores are based on a 5 point scale, with 5 being the highest score possible. 1 = Not so much; 2 = Somewhat; 3 = A goodly amount; 4 = Quite a bit; 5 = Very much. Interpreting the results reveals the following:

- Students gave "openness" the second highest score – 4.15. 17 of the 20 rated openness as either a 4 or a 5. 1 rated the degree of openness at 1, 1 at 2, and 1 at 3.

- Conversely, students gave "closedness" the *lowest* score – 1.55. 17 of the 20 rated the degree of closedness as either a 1 or a 2 ('not so much' or 'somewhat').

- The disparity of openness and closedness is the greatest of any pair of contrasting words that were included (rigid/flexible, inclusive/exclusive, open/closed).

- It is fair to conclude that students regard GCT/Jax as having a high degree of openness. As has been established thus far, one of the hallmarks of an Open System is that it is open.

This is further reinforced by their responses to the first question asked, "Describe the culture (climate, environment) at GCTS/Jax. " The culture was found to be "highly collegial"; "very open and accommodating"; "encouraging"; "welcoming"; "servant led;

accessible"; "there is a feeling that we are all colleagues in the pursuit of similar goals, even on points where we disagree"; "a group of brothers and sisters that mutually hold each other up with encouragement and love"; "the culture is one of diversity, cohesiveness, and transparency"; "open to diverse ideas."

Regarding Communication, two questions were asked: "What seems to be valued or a priority to the leadership at GCTS/Jax regarding COMMUNICATION?"; and, "What adjectives would you use to describe the style and commitment to COMMUNICATION as demonstrated by the leadership at GCTS/Jax." A sampling of the responses includes: "open forum for discussion of class material, theological concepts, etc."; "the leadership at GCTS/Jax seems to value communicating academically related information. However, they also value students having the freedom to ask questions, or give input for the overall education experience."; "they are vested in our success"; "you are understood to have individual needs and you are treated accordingly. You are not just a number but a real person"; "personal and relational"; "seemed to be viewed as a means of building community".

Adjectives used to describe Communication included: "open, authentic, interactive, welcoming, reliable, honest, caring, warm, thorough, prompt, frequent, compassionate, inclusive, candid, personal and relational".

The conclusion drawn from the above is that the student experience at GCTS/Jax regarding Communication is highly favorable, and that the system of communication is indeed open, inclusive, and collaborative.

In regards to Relationships, two questions were asked: "What seems to be valued or a priority to the leadership at GCTS/Jax regarding RELATIONSHIPS?"; and, "What

adjectives would you use to describe the style and commitment to RELATIONSHIPS as demonstrated by the leadership at GCTS/Jax?" Responses included: "In my experience, the leadership at GCTS/Jax seems to value people's needs over grades or curriculum"; "relationships were always a very high priority"; "they have taken the time to get to know each of the students. It is not a mere academic endeavor, but a joint quest that is built on eternal relationships"; "GCTS/Jax fostered an environment that made me feel valued, not only as a student, but as a person"; "students are encouraged to get know each other, and study and work together"; "they are 'there' for the students"; "relationships were a high priority to the staff".

Adjectives used to describe Relationships included: "personal, intimate, interactive, caring, genuine, helpful, supportive, open, engaging, trustworthy, encouraging, servant based, intentional, humble, genuine, real, committed, approachable and considerate, honest, unifying, a priority, loving, pastoral, redemptive, easily accessible".

Based on the above, it is clear that the student experience at GCTS/Jax regarding Relationships suggests the system is an open one – trust is present, as is collegiality, unity, and an environment where it is safe to be vulnerable.

The final category of questions regards the Openness/Closedness of the extension site. Two related questions asked were, "How open [closed] to your input, ideas, feedback, suggestions, observations, etc. has the leadership of GCTS/Jax been?"

OPENNESS – "very open"; "heard and accepted"; "willing to listen and implement where possible"; "always open to hearing ideas, suggestions and feedback. They are avidly looking for what God may have to say"; "always willing to listen to

suggestions, soliciting ways to improve the seminary"; "I always felt that I could share my thoughts".

CLOSENESS – "very open to ideas of students"; "not been closed at all"; "always very open"; "timely and appreciative"; "haven't seen evidences [of closedness]"; "never experienced this [closedness] at GCTS/Jax".

The evidence provided above, taken from the interviews with the leadership team and from the survey of current students, strongly suggests the presence of a redemptive culture at GCTS/Jax; and the presence of an Open System of communication, relationship, and function.

A Look Forward – The Importance of Maintaining an Open System

The expression "nothing lasts forever" holds true for all of life, be it regarding an all day sucker, a sunny day, or an Open System. If anything is to have staying power, if anything is to endure, if any good thing is to have a lasting impact, it will do so as a result of intention and choice, not dumb luck or chance. "Every institution is vulnerable, no matter how great. No matter how much you've achieved, no matter how far you've gone, no matter how much power you've garnered, you are vulnerable to decline. There is no law of nature that the most powerful will inevitably remain at the top. Anyone can fall and most eventually do."[29] This is not a doomsday, "the sky is falling," prognostication. It is a truism, based on what experience and history have shown. It is based on the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which holds true for all of life.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics dates back to Sadi Carnot's 1824 paper

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[29] Jim Collins, *How the Mighty Fall: And Why Some Companies Never Give In* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc, 2009), 8.

Reflections on the Motive Power of Fire. It states that "overall, heat cannot flow from a cold object to a hot one. Since heat measures disorder, or entropy, another way of expressing this concept is that entropy always increases for an isolated system."[30] Entropy means "increasing disorder", or "that which happens if you let nature take its course.[31] "Another way of stating the second Law then is: 'The universe is constantly getting more disorderly!' Viewed that way, we can see the second law is all about us. We have to <u>work</u> hard to straighten a room, but left to itself it becomes a mess again very quickly and very easily. Even if we never enter it, it becomes dusty and musty. How difficult to maintain houses, and machinery, and our bodies in perfect working order: how easy to let them deteriorate. In fact, all we have to do is nothing, and everything deteriorates, collapses, breaks down, wears out, all by itself -- and that is what the second law is all about. Isaac Asimov, Smithsonian Institute Journal, June 1970, p. 6."[32]

For our present purposes, open or closed systems, "another way of stating the second law is that, for a bounded [closed] system, entropy increases, it never decreases."[33] Applied to an Open System, it suggests that left to itself, an Open System will deteriorate collapse, break down, and wear out. And head toward becoming a closed system. "The natural state of things is chaos. This is the principle of entropy: Any process, no matter how orderly and well-designed, will degenerate to chaos unless we keep adding energy. And yet, many seemingly bright managers appear shocked to find

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[30] Erin Britton, "Second Law of Thermodynamics: Heat Travels from Hot to Cold Bodies and Not the Other Way Around," Dec. 23, 2008, http://www.suite101.com/content/second-law-of-thermodynamics-a86018 (accessed January 23, 2011).
[31] Conservapedia: The Trustworthy Encyclopedia, "Second Law of Thermodynamics," http://www.conservapedia.com/Second_Law_of_Thermodynamics (accessed January 23, 2011).
[32] Conservapedia, "Second Law of Thermodynamics," http://www.conservapedia.com/Second_Law_of_Thermodynamics.
[33] Britton, "Second Law of Thermodynamics," http://www.suite101.com/content/second-law-of-thermodynamics-a86018 (accessed January 23, 2011).

that the gains so painstakingly achieved have disappeared in only a few short years -- or even months. Every business process requires energy in the form of controls, redesign, new procedures, additional training, performance measurements and many interventions just to maintain its original level of performance. If we want to continuously improve the level of performance, we must add even more energy to the system."[34] Energy, in our case, would be translated 'intentional openness' (openness as defined above). In other words, once established, an Open System must be maintained to continue as an Open System. It will not continue to exist as an Open System by its own volition. It must be the choice and intent of the leadership present. "What does this have to do with management or leadership? Human systems need constant care just like a library or a house. The job is never ending. Unfortunately, managers who tend to think in black and white terms believe that once a system is in place it should work without their care. System dynamics are never stable; there is never a time when a system is perfectly balanced. Just as you are constantly adjusting your balance when riding a bicycle, a team needs constant balancing and adjustments."[35]

Unless intended and maintained, the fate of the Open System in Jacksonville will be toward taking on ingredients of a closed system. Without conscious effort and commitment to sustaining an Open System, it will not be a matter of "if" but of "when" this drift takes place. The Second Law of Thermodynamics will allow for nothing less. The future of the Open System in Jacksonville will, therefore, depend on the commitment

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[34] A. Blanton Godfrey, "Entropy: The Key Processes Within an Organization Have Many Complex Interactions," *Quality Digest Online June 1997,* http://www.qualitydigest.com/june97/html/qmanage.html (accessed January 23, 2011).
[35] Darrel W. Ray, comment on "Entropy: The Second Law Applied to Management," Teaming up: A real world team-based work systems blog, comment posted June 10, 2006, http://longtermchange.com/wordpress/?p=179 (accessed January 23, 2011).

of the present leadership to pursuing an Open System. That commitment will necessitate the active pursuit and presence of the following:

A Commitment to Redemptive Leadership

As has been established throughout this thesis-project, Redemptive Leadership is best accomplished within a redemptive culture. In a redemptive organization and culture, people are not only valued over the mission, the purpose, the vision, and the objectives.....people *are* the mission, the purpose, the vision, and the objective. In a redemptive organization and culture, John 6:29 guides the activity taking place: "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." The commitment is to be the people of God before doing the work of God. In a redemptive organization and culture, *how* what is done supersedes, takes precedence over, and even determines *what* is done. Attention is not so much given to *what* is being done as to *how* "the what" is being done. Questions such as the following will need to be asked and answers reviewed going forward: What kind of culture is being pursued? What is the ongoing mission, purpose, vision, and objective of the extension site? How is the "bottom line" being defined; who and what are the priorities in that definition? How will supervision look: how will the staff be cared for and measured; how will accountability be accomplished; how will the mission be accomplished?

A Commitment to Open Communication

Open communication is inclusive rather than exclusive. All participants are welcomed to the table; and once at the table, they are given a voice....a voice that is

encouraged to speak; a voice that is regarded, respected, and sought out. The result is communication that is collaborative, and explored in an environment in which ideas are freely exchanged within a dialogue (which listens to, hears, and clarifies what is said, as opposed to listening for the purpose of sculpting a counter-attack or rebuttal). Questions necessary for open communication include: How is "open communication" defined? Who is being given a voice, and to what degree - students, volunteers, leadership, staff, faculty, alumni, etc? To what degree is conversation occurring as a dialogue as opposed to a discussion? What are the commitments, the priorities, and the values as regards the communication that is taking place?

A Commitment to Open Relationships

Open relationships are evidenced by fellowship taking place, fellowship that leads to and creates Community. Participants are seen and regarded as peers and partners. Open relationships result in a team that is unified. Open relationships bring about an environment in which it is safe to be real and vulnerable. The way in which thoughts, words, behavior, and actions are expressed brings about collegiality. Questions that need to be asked to maintain open relationships include: To what degree is Community taking place beyond task accomplishment? How do team mates regard each other and pursue each other? Is the team unified? Is collegiality occurring among the different groupings of those participating - students, staff, leadership, etc? What are the commitments, the priorities, and the values as regards the relationships that are taking place? When push comes to shove, how are *people* valued in relation to the tasks being done or the commitment to the bottom line?

A Commitment to Open Function

Open function includes Systems Thinking, where the people and departments are seen as interrelated and interconnected. The open functioning organization sees itself operating like a machine, in which the parts are interdependent. The open functioning organization is flexible and malleable, as regards its approach, its thinking, and its implementation. It has a dynamic, rather than a static or insular, worldview and perspective. Questions important to ask regarding maintaining an open function include: How would the staff and leadership say that the day-to-day functioning of the extension site reflects a systems thinking approach? How flexible is the leadership and staff to innovation, ideas, creative options, and suggestions? How committed is the staff and leadership to annual reviews, assessments, and evaluations? What is the predominant world view that exists among the staff and leadership, especially as it has to do with communication, relationships, and function? What are the commitments, the priorities, and the values as regards the operations and functioning that is taking place?

Jim Collins, in his book *How the Mighty Fall,* describes the five stages of decline in organizations. Several of these speak to the future of the Open System that currently exists in Jacksonville.

The first stage of decline (Hubris Born of Success) cautions an organization to not forget *why* it is – its values, its purpose, and its culture.[36] The staff and leadership in Jacksonville (and the entire institution) would be well advised to remember and continually review, and in the process confirm and re-establish, *why* they are – providing theological education and training for those going into the ministry. The forms, formats,

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[36] Collins, *How the Mighty Fall*, 42.

methods, and ways of delivery are ancillary to the *why*. The principle here is to protect what you *are*, not how you deliver what you are.

Part of the tension that exists between S. Hamilton and Charlotte (mentioned on page 121-122) is based on ideological differences. Those differences focus on *how* theological education is delivered. A focus on the *how* always blurs and minimizes the *why* in any organization. Which, according to Collins' research, can lead to demise and ruin. Gordon-Conwell is not exempt to this possibility. The encouragement here is for the institution to remain focused on *who* they are, and to consider *how* that is accomplished as a secondary consideration.

Collins goes on to say in the second stage of decline (Undisciplined Pursuit of More) that "the best leaders we've studied had a peculiar genius for seeing themselves as not all that important, recognizing the need to build an executive team and to craft a culture based on core values that do not depend upon a single heroic leader....The evidence leads me to this sobering conclusion: while no leader can single-handedly build an enduring great company, the wrong leader vested with power can almost single-handedly bring a company down."[37] Successful and enduring organizations are those built around a system of communication, relationship, and function that involves, values, utilizes, and maximizes those within the organization – an Open System. This echoes what has been established in this thesis-project – redemptive organizations are those that are led by redemptive leaders; and redemptive leaders are committed to establishing an Open System of communication, relationship, and function. When the organization chooses to become centered on the leader rather than the mission, purpose, vision and call, the organization is positioning itself for a fall. For an Open System to continue in

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[37] Collins, *How the Mighty Fall*, 62.

Jacksonville, the leadership will need to continue to: (1) build teams that are inclusive; (2) create a culture that solicits, welcomes, and rewards collaborative expression of ideas, thoughts, and suggestions; (3) develop collegial relationships in an environment of trust and safe vulnerability; and (4), employ a day-to-day operating system that endorses and accomplishes the above.

The third stage (Denial of Risk and Peril) implores utilizing the wisdom of the community. This begins with knowing the flock; and by taking the pulse of the organization periodically. In Jacksonville, this would include those that are experiencing the organization – students, volunteers, faculty, and the team. This could be accomplished in a variety of ways – interview, surveys, face-to-face dialogue, exit interviews, etc. This suggests having an interest in and commitment to quality control on the human side. There is a commitment and system in place within the institution that provides for the evaluation of classes and faculty. Why not expand this to include the culture and the system of communication, relationship, and function, as well?

An environment that seeks to know "what is", regardless the cost or fear of what such an effort might reveal, is an environment that is a learning culture and an Open System. This would mean intending to move beyond what is comfortable and a mindset that looks for validation of existing bias, preferences, or the stated mission or vision. This would necessitate a commitment to seeking truth, regardless what that search might reveal. "There is a marked decline in the quality and amount of dialogue and debate; there is a shift toward either consensus or dictatorial management rather than a process of argument and disagreement followed by unified commitment to execute decisions."[38]

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[38] Collins, *How the Mighty Fall*, 81.

The fourth stage (Grasping for Salvation) is avoided by keeping the main thing the main thing. This is a commitment to reviewing and making necessary adjustments toward a pursuit of what the organization stands for – mission, purpose, core values, etc. And then making these known and articulating them frequently.

Summary

A redemptive culture and an Open System are in place in Jacksonville. For the extension site to continue as a bastion of redemption, there will need to be a commitment to continue a redemptive course – not only in regards to that which is *done* but also in regards to *how* what is done is accomplished. "The main messages of our work remains: we are not imprisoned by our circumstances, our setbacks, our history, our mistakes, or even staggering defeats along the way. We are freed by our choices."[39] Two truisms and reservoirs of hope are contained here - *we are not held captive by our circumstances;* and, *we are freed by our choices.* Jesus put it this way in John 8:32, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

A tale is told of two young boys who wanted to trick a seer living in their village. They caught a bird, with one of the lads holding the bird in his hands behind his back as they approached the elder. "We have a bird. Tell us, oh wise one….is it dead, or is it alive?" they asked. If the answer was "alive", the boy would wring its neck and produce the evidence refuting the answer. If the answer was "dead", the boy would let the bird fly free, again refuting the answer. "The answer lies completely in your hands," was the wisdom of the sage.

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[39] Collins, *How the Mighty Fall*, 120.

And so it is in Jacksonville. The choice for an Open System was made by the original leadership. It remains to be seen if a similar choice will be made going forward. The answer lies completely in their hands.

In the final chapter, we will summarize the previous four chapters, make observations, and recommend possibilities for further research and study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

As has been stated and demonstrated in chapters one through four, it is necessary that leaders are aware of, if not overtly choose, what kind of culture they are establishing, as well as what system of communication, relationship, and function they are employing to create that culture – an open or a closed system. The heart of the leader sets the tone for the heart of the organization.[1] For leaders who desire to lead in such a way that the outcome of their leadership includes redemption, it has been established that one system brings that about – an Open System.

Having been in ministry for over thirty years, and having been fortunate to be led by those who modeled an Open System, prior to commencing this thesis-project the author had encountered many of the ingredients that are classified as the tenets of Open Systems, although not knowing them to be entitled as such at the time. While much of what would be researched and studied within this thesis-project was known in principle, the process brought a name and a language to the principles and foundations of a system that was being lived and experienced.

Such is likely the case for the seasoned leader. Experiencing the rigors of leadership brings with it exposure to the contrasts and distinctions between open and closed systems. For some, those differences are entertained in a formal, even academic manner. For others, they become known more through experience, deductive reasoning, or discovery. Given sufficient tenure, an effective leader will become at least minimally aware of and familiar with the concepts presented here.

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[1] Harvey Powers and Rod Cooper, "Redemptive Leadership and Organizational Development" (class lecture; Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; Boston, MA; May 2007-2009).

However, the contention of the author would be that the leadership issue most leaders face is not a lack of knowledge or familiarity regarding culture and systems. Nor a label or language to identify and formalize what is being experienced. Rather, the leadership issue for most leaders is one of function – a failure to choose, employ, and exercise an Open System. Or stated conversely, opting for a closed system, either consciously or unconsciously. Opting for an Open System is most certainly the road less traveled and the much more difficult path to follow.

To choose an Open System takes a leader that has done his/her internal work. And in so doing, has died (or is dying) to what that would otherwise propel them toward the ingredients and results of a closed system. Listed below are the most significant conclusions that the author has discovered while studying Redemptive Leadership and the Open System. His hope is that these will inform your life and ministry as they have his.

1. An Open System requires a leader that is aware of self. The redemptive leader agrees with and embraces the realization that life, and its pursuits, are impossible to achieve through one's own effort and thrust. If a dream, mission, or vision is worthy of pursuing, it requires much more than what they, and those whose companionship they prefer, are able to bring to the party. Knowing *who* we are, and even more importantly *whose* we are, is the precursor and determinant of *what* we will accomplish. Wise is the leader that has studied their own reality, and as a result is aware of both their giftedness and their limitations.

2. An Open System takes a leader with a foundation beyond self. Leaders that value a redemptive culture and its compliment an Open System are those who have

established that they no longer belong to themselves. On one occasion, a young married couple enlisted the maternal grandparents to baby-sit their two young daughters while they enjoyed an evening out. At some point during the evening, grandpa found it necessary to provide guidance and instruction by spelling out what behavior was, and was not, acceptable. Upon their return, the couple was met by a heated and stirred up three year old, who let them know in no uncertain terms that the grandfather could not tell her what to do because, as she emphatically stated, "he is not the boss of me!" Leaders who have established who is Boss, and have discovered that it is not them, are those leaders that are able to pursue a redemptive mission and purpose that is superior to their quest for self.

3. An Open System takes a leader that is aware of others. The redemptive leader is committed to and favors the concept of "we" over the concept of "me". To the redemptive leader, T.E.A.M. is an anachronism for Together Everyone Accomplishes More. To the redemptive leader, the journey is at least as important as the arrival, and that journey is made most sweet when it includes a community of believers. The journey, for the redemptive leader, is enabling the Body to exercise its giftedness in an environment and culture that values their inclusion and places a priority on their development.

4. Cultures are made, not assigned. The heart of the leader determines the heart of the organization. The heart of the leader will also determine the culture and the system of communication, relationship, and function that will exist. There is no "default" culture. Cultures are the result of leadership.

5. God uses adversity as the catalyst toward redemptive growth in a fallen world. Would that it were not so. However, the very things that we consider obstacles and stumbling blocks are those that propel us toward redemption when they are taken captive and given over to a gracious and benevolent Father. Martin Luther's wife is quoted as saying, "I would never have understood the practice of the Christian life and work, if God had never brought afflictions to my life."[2] The Lord is in the business of taking our lemons and making lemonade out of them when they are entrusted to Him.

6. The culture of a ministry, and the degree of the openness of the system present, will contribute as significantly as any "spiritual" ingredient to the redemptive efficacy of that organization. Bible studies, prayer meetings, and worship services are indispensable to Christians everywhere. However, if those are conducted in a culture and setting that includes a closed system, the system itself will mitigate against the very truths and tenets that are being taught. The following quote, derived from Edgar Dale's Cone of Experience, states that "after 2 weeks, we tend to remember 10% of what we Read, 20% of what we Hear, 30% of what we See, 50% of what we Hear and See, 70% of what we Say, and 90% of what we Say and Do"[3] "Winston Churchill put it this way, 'We shape our dwellings, and afterwards our dwellings shape us.'"[4] Applied to our current study, the culture and system that we experience and in which we participate will be major contributors to what we learn, as well as to the messages that we receive. When the non-verbal messages of the system contradict and are inconsistent with the verbal messages being espoused, the resulting incompatibilities will undermine the redemptive possibilities.

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[2] L.B. Cowman, *Streams in the Desert* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 48.
[3] www.cals.ncsu.edu/agexed/sae/ppt1/sld012.htm.
[4] Edgar Dale, *Building a Learning Environment* (Bloomington: Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. 1972), 16.

7. It is part of a universal, unyielding law that unless an Open System is maintained, it will head toward a closed system. The choice of a culture and system are not forever, not etched in stone. What is established needs to be maintained if it is to be retained.

This parallels the faith journey. Joshua 24:15 states, "choose for yourselves *this day* whom you will serve" (author's emphasis). Psalm 118:24 adds, "*This* is the day the Lord has made" (author's emphasis). Manna was given on a daily basis and good for that day only (Ex 16:4-5). We face a daily choice. We can follow and serve the Lord.....or not. The same can be said for leadership and systems. The leader is faced with a daily choice. *Not* making a choice to pursue an Open System is to choose to pursue a closed system. Yesterday's choice is good for yesterday; today's choice needs to be made for today. In the faith, and in leadership, no one can rest on their laurels.

8. Finally, neither redemption nor an Open System can be legislated. It might be possible to regulate and demand certain behaviors; it happens in closed systems on athletic practice fields and in families daily. However, *choices* are the product of an Open System. And redemption, being a matter of the heart, soul, mind, and strength, is a choice and can not be forced on another. Redemption can only be chosen as it presents itself to us. It is not the result of militarism, bullying, force, or coercion. Which are ingredients of a closed system. The only pathway to redemption is through a heart that is touched and softened, a will that is nourished and nurtured, and a mind that is open to the still, small voice of the Savior that beckons us to come and follow. The system that leads to redemption is an open, not a closed, system.

Suggestions for Further Research and Study

The nature of a thesis-project is to keep the topic as focused as possible. Hence, there are several arenas that, if explored, would make a further contribution to the topic:

1. Studying, contrasting, and providing insight into the cultures of the four Gordon-Conwell campuses. The author's belief is that this would reveal contrasting systems of communication, relationship, and function that simultaneously compliment and compete with each other, along with contributing to and detracting from the redemptive possibilities within the institution.

2. Conducting a follow-up study on the type of system present at the Jacksonville extension site in five years. As leadership transitions, so does the institution. Dr. Kaiser retired from his position in June of 2006. Dr. Bradley retired as the Dean in Charlotte in June of 2008. The author stepped aside as the Assistant to the Dean in Jacksonville in May 2010. To what degree the system has remained open and to what degree it has become closed; what factors have contributed to those changes; how those leadership changes have impacted the culture and system for those who are experiencing the site – these are questions worthy to be pursued and answered.

3. A further exploration of the concept of the "degree" of openness/closedness that was presented in chapter one. Would it be possible to identify the degree to which a set of criteria would need to be present to determine whether a system was heading toward openness or closedness? Would it be possible to create a "formula" that would include these degrees, which could then be applied against a set of circumstances and used to assist leaders in determining the appropriate degree of openness and closedness that would be prudent for that situation?

APPENDIX 1

INITIAL LETTER REQUESTING A JACKSONVILLE EXTENSION SITE

First Presbyterian Church

A note from
Robert Morris

5-1-03
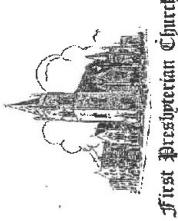
Dear Dr. Kadavor,

Thanks for all you have done to get this venture moving. Money is already beginning to be pledged towards the Jacksonville Campus!

These are exciting days.

My prayers are with you and look forward to hearing from the seminary very soon.

Blessings!

Robert Morris

354-8439
118 E. Monroe Street ✠ Jacksonville, FL 32202

May 1, 2003

Dr. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., President
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
130 Essex Street
South Hamilton, MA 01982

Dear Dr. Kaiser, Trustees, and Faculty of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary:

After much prayer and careful consideration, we the undersigned, desire to partner with Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary to launch a branch campus in Jacksonville, Florida. Please consider this our official invitation.

We are extending this invitation because of our conviction that this is a superb opportunity from our Lord to better serve Him. We further believe that the academic excellence of Gordon-Conwell and its unique position as a leading evangelical, non-denominational seminary, will exactly meet the needs of this area's large Christian population.

There appears to be a sizeable, pent-up demand for a seminary of academic excellence in north Florida. A number of clergy and lay people currently commute some three hours each way to seminaries in Orlando, Florida.

Over twenty respondents to an informal survey taken last year, (by a para-church organization to their members), expressed an interest in taking courses at an accredited seminary on evenings and weekends.

There are in excess of a dozen churches and para-church ministries willing to stand behind this venture with prayer and financial support. At least three churches have offered classroom space to be used and are willing to supply necessary office space as needed. There is also a willingness to form a development committee at the appropriate time.

Jacksonville has become one of the leading cities of the south with many believing Christian civic leaders willing to extend themselves to make Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary a most welcome addition to the First Coast.

This invitation is offered with thankfulness to God for the way our heavenly Father has led in this process.

With prayers for God's richest blessings,

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Rev. Lester Cornec
Signature

YoungLife - Flagler College
Ministry   St. Augustine, Fl.

Bay Clarke
Signature

30 + Christian Singles
Ministry

Rev. Perry F. M
Signature

Pastor - First U.M.C.
Ministry   Jacksonville

Jon Baworth GM
Signature
Conrad Lamele
106.5 the promise
Gospel 1400 Truelight
Ministry   (Radio Stations)

Rev. Kenneth A. Olsen, Sr.
Signature

Baymeadows Community
Ministry   Church CRC
Retired Hospital Chaplain

Robert L. Morris Jr.
Signature

First Presbyterian
Ministry   Jacksonville

Signature

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
Ministry

Rev. Bob Bronkema
Signature

Pastor - First Pres. Rbitka
Ministry

Rev. Lee N. Welling
Signature   Advent Christ
New Life Community Church
Ministry
Berkshire Christian College
Partners

Diane Brotta
Signature

Beach United
Ministry   Methodist
Church

James M. Proctor
Signature

Presiding Elder AMEC
Ministry

Granville
Signature

Mr. Olson   AMEC
Ministry

Michael J Sim
Signature

Metro Director - YoungLife
Ministry

DR. THOMAS S. WARE
Thomas Ware II
Signature
SENIOR PASTOR WEST
JACKSONVILLE ADVENT
Ministry   CHRISTIAN CHUR
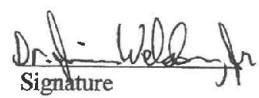
Dr. Jim Weldon Jr
Signature

Fleming Island NCD
Ministry

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Signature

PONTE VEDRA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Ministry

Signature
CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH
& SUPER BOWL OUTREACH
Ministry

Signature
Mandarin Presbyterian
Ministry Church

Signature
All Souls Episcopal
Ministry

Signature
Urban Mission Episcopal
Downtown Jacksonville
Ministry

Signature

Ministry

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The First Light
Ministry

Signature
The Salvation Army.
Ministry

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Ministry

Signature
The The Ashcroft Foundation
Ministry

Signature
Cross Road Church
Ministry UMC

Signature

Ministry

Ed Nearle
Signature

Ministry

Signature

Ministry

Signature
Eastside Community
Ministry Church

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Robt E. Fillinger, Ed.D.
Signature

Prof. Emeritus, GCTS
Ministry

Brad Layland
Signature

Young Life Central Fl.
Ministry

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APPENDIX 2

JACKSONVILLE PROSPECTUS

**Exploratory Committee
For a Jacksonville, Florida Branch
Of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary**

c/o First Presbyterian Church
118 East Monroe Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202

March 4, 2004

Dr. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.
President, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
150 Essex Street
South Hamilton, MA 01982

Dear Dr. Kaiser:

We are pleased to provide you with this update on progress toward defining the feasibility of a branch of Gordon-Conwell in Jacksonville.

In the year since your visit here on March 17, 2003, significant progress has been made:

➢ The number of churches/pastors/lay persons who have expressed support for this concept has grown to about five dozen, drawn from the several denominations and organizations identified with their names in the Appendix.

➢ A core leadership group is at work visiting another 15 - 20 major churches/pastors/laymen in northeast Florida this month to acquaint them with evolving plans and enlist their support.

> Estimates of potential enrollees in early and longer term classes are being assembled from pastors, and early estimates are encouraging toward a potential student pool well into the low hundreds.

> Several financial contributions have been pledged, including a gift of $5,000, and we are confident that this number will be multiplied by month-end.

> Excellent working relationships have been established with Alan Cellamare from the Charlotte campus, who is providing valuable coaching and assistance.

The commitment and enthusiasm of local supporters is high, and we are happy to reiterate and reinforce the preliminary invitation we sent you last May 1. We look forward to defining further with the Seminary our mutual plans and expectations and, God willing, to opening the program this fall.

Should you have any questions, please call me (904) 354-8439 or Ed Hearle (904) 270-8550.

For the Exploratory Committee

Robert L. Morris, Jr.
First Presbyterian Church

Appendix - Prospectus

Appendix

PROSPECTUS

For establishing in Jacksonville, Florida, a branch of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, a leading multi-denominational institution headquartered in the Boston area.

Exploratory Committee

The following people have expressed interest in exploring the establishment of this branch seminary in Jacksonville. Affiliations shown are for identification purposes only.

Jack Augustine, The First Life
David Austell, First Light Magazine
Brenda Baker First Pres. Jax
Richard Baker
Jon Bosworth
Richard Boulware, Mandarin Presbyterian
Rick Bourque, Eastside Community
Bob Bronkema, First Pres. Palatka
Peter Church, Super Bowl Outreach
Roy Clarke
Les Comee, Young Life, Flagler College
Jackie Davis, PCUSA
Adam Donner, First Pres Jax
Robert Fillinger, Professor Emeritus GCTS
Ben Goldsmith, Campus Crusade
Guy Groff, GCTS Alumnus
Calvin Hayes, GCTS alumnus
Ed Hearle
Steven Jenkins, GCTS alumnus
Victor Kruger
Brad Layland, Young Life Orlando
James Lloyd
Nicholas Louh, GCTS alumnus
Cliff Mayfield
Wilsey J McKnight
Jerry Milner, First United Meth, Jax
Robert Morris, First Pres,
Larry O'Connell, All Souls Church, Jax
Kenneth Olsen, Baymeadows Community, Jax

Richard Parker, Creekside Community, G'ville
Dr. Reg Parsons, PCUSA
Donald Patterson
Ralph Patterson
Richard Petry
Kevin Pound, Mandarin Pres,
James Proctor, St. Paul AME, Jax
John Ragsdale, Geneva Pres, Jax
Granville Reed Mt. Olive AME
Peter Richards, LTD Associates
F.D. Richardson, Jr., Historic Mt. Zion AME
Brian Robinson, GCTS alumnus
Mike Simon, Young Life Jax
Ron Smith, St. Johns Pres, Jax
Paul Stake
Charles Stull
David Terry, The Ashcroft Foundation
Diane Trotter, Beaches United Meth
Clayton Turner, GCTS alumnus
David Tuttle, Urban Mission Experience
Adam Vaughan, Ponte Vedra Pres
Larry Wagner
Thomas Warren II, W. Jax Advent Christian
Mike Weinstein
James Weldon, Fleming Island NCD
Rick Young
Lee Welkley, New Life Community, Jax
Paul Woods

Basic Rationale and Concept

No accredited theological seminary exists in northeast Florida, a growing region with a population of 1.1 million. An array of churches and church members exists that is exceptionally deep and diverse. The number of church staff and laypersons interested in theological education is in the tens of thousands. Hundreds now seek such education from the nearest accredited seminaries (in Orlando, 135 miles to the south) or via various extension offerings.

For the past 13 years Gordon-Conwell has successfully operated a branch campus in Charlotte, N.C., and is interested in exploring the feasibility of a branch in Jacksonville. (See Appendix for further information about Gordon-Conwell.)

Any such branch would start small – a few classes taught by professors from the Charlotte or Boston campuses, as well as adjunct professors. The classes would be fully accredited and would likely be part of a certificate program that would meet degree requirements. Initial courses would be concentrated offerings on weekends. (Charlotte or Boston would confer degrees in the initial years).

Tuition would likely be in the $350-400/credit hour range, reduced by such scholarship support as can be raised in Jacksonville.

Finances

The seminary suggests that a suitable initial financial commitment from Jacksonville would be $25,000/year for three years. This support would be secured from a variety of sources (individuals, foundations, denominational bodies, churches and other organizations). The Exploratory Committee has a strong sense that this level of funding will be possible. At present, no commitments have been received, nor have they been solicited.

Next Steps

1. Undergird the entire effort in prayer.

2. Call on key persons in the Jacksonville ecumenical community to elicit their views and solicit their support.

3. Explore potential funding sources for their interest and possible commitment level.

4. Explore facility options for classroom and administrative needs.

5. Explore possible courses to be offered in first several years. Identify potential faculty (likely to attract students). Estimate potential student pool.

6. If all lights are green, reconfigure Exploratory Committee into an Organizing Committee, and proceed with necessary next steps (identifying student base, course offerings, administrative needs, funding, etc.).

Appendix

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Overview

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary is an independent, multi-denominational graduate school that is dedicated to preparing men and women for contemporary evangelical ministry. It has its roots in the rich heritage of Gordon Divinity School (Boston) and Conwell School of Theology (Philadelphia), which began providing evangelical leadership for the Christian church in the 1880's.

Through the vision and leadership of evangelist Billy Graham, philanthropist J. Howard Pew, and theologian Harold J. Ockenga, the two schools became Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 1969. A 118-acre campus was purchased in South Hamilton, Massachusetts. Dr. Ockenga, long-time pastor Boston's historic Park Street Church, served as president of the merged institution through its first decade. The Board of Trustees unanimously elected Dr. Robert E. Cooley as the second president of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 1981, and elected Dr. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., as its third president in 1996. Dr. Graham currently serves as chairman emeritus of the Board.

The seminary has a three-campus structure that presently serves over 2000 students. The South Hamilton, Massachusetts campus serves a more traditional student body in a residential setting, with an average student age of 27. The Boston campus (Center for Urban Ministerial Education) serves the inner-city church and trains a diverse, multi-ethnic student body for ministry leadership. Classes are taught in six different languages for the training of ethnic, inner-city ministers needed for the various people groups in the Boston area. The Charlotte, North Carolina campus is a non-residential model that favors an adult education approach that is contextual in its application. Students are in intensive mentoring relationships with church ministry leaders for the duration of their study. Students commute from up to 5 hours away to take classes on Friday and Saturday. The average age is 37.

The seminary serves dozens of ethnic and minority groups at all campuses. Over 100 denominations are represented with Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists being the largest percentages. African American students make up approximately 25% of those at Gordon-Conwell campuses. Close to 40% of students are female. The seminary offers a number of master level degree courses in addition to the doctor of ministry degree.

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary degree programs are accredited by the Association of Theological Schools, as well as by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Accountability for the success of the campuses and programs is sustained through a reporting process to Gordon-Conwell's President, Dr. Walter C. Kaiser, and the Board of Trustees. A local Board of Advisors – representing a spectrum of Christian churches and denominations, as well as a variety of local and regional interests – provides guidance and support to the educational centers of all three campuses.

March 2004

APPENDIX 3

GCTS BUSINESS PLAN

Gordon-Conwell
Theological Seminary

130 ESSEX STREET
SOUTH HAMILTON, MA 01982
978 468-7111

May 19, 2004

received by
FED EX 5/25/04

Mr. Edward F. R. Hearle
1331 N. First Street-1002
Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250

Dear Ed:

On behalf of Dr. Kaiser and our Board of Trustees, thank you for the wonderful work you and the Exploratory Committee have done to get us to this point in the process.

I am enclosing a copy of the document that our Board of Trustees reviewed. Our Board did consider the idea of accepting gifts restricted for a possible extension site. However, they felt it would be more prudent and fair to folks in Jacksonville if we encouraged the development of pledges, rather than gifts, until a final "go"/"no-go" decision is made with regards to the extension site.

We are working to get organized following a flurry of activity resulting from our May Board of Trustee meeting so that we can develop next steps with you. Thank you, again, for all of your efforts.

With appreciation,

Robert S. Landrebe
Executive Vice President and
Chief Financial Officer

RSL/djs

Enclosure

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GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

JACKSONVILLE EXTENSION SITE

EDUCATIONAL AND BUSINESS PLAN DRAFT

COPY

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Theological Seminary

EDUCATIONAL AND BUSINESS PLAN
JACKSONVILLE EXTENSION SITE

Objective: To develop a viable economic model that is integrated with perceived student demand and a realistic assessment of the Seminary's resources so that we can ensure a quality, affordable theological education for students in the Jacksonville area.

I. THE EDUCATIONAL AND BUSINESS PLAN NARRATIVE

The following narrative will set the pattern for our discussions and recommendations at the faculty, Jacksonville exploratory committee, leadership team, and trustee levels, with the final disposition and resolution awaiting the decision of the Board of Trustees at their October 2004 meeting:

1. Strategic Issues. The potential of the Jacksonville site fits well into the President's overall strategy for growth. In many ways, it could function well as a "test site" for other similar extension sites or campuses in the distant future.

   If we begin our thinking by agreeing that the price and cost of theological education has escalated far beyond the ability of most future pastors to afford and pay back their loans, and the ability of almost all theological schools to deliver that education in the future at anything near the needed cost levels, then it is clear that we must begin to develop alternative or creative strategies if the seminary as presently · shaped will last and be able to serve its present mission. It might only serve the university and only those going into the teaching field. This is an unacceptable alternative in light of the historic goal set for seminaries.

   One such strategy would be to designate the South Hamilton campus as a hub for centralized services for a number of extensions or campuses extended up and down the east coast. Using that scenario, one could envision the South Hamilton campus serving as the hub for sites in locations such as: Nova Scotia, Boston, New York, Washington D.C., Charlotte, and Jacksonville -- a strategy that may take ten years or more to fully implement. This strategy would require the addition of resources to fully support a growing student body, including the strategic addition of more faculty (some in South Hamilton and, perhaps, even more at extension sites) and improved use of technology for both teaching (e.g. video-conference production, Blackboard for class administration) and learning (e.g. on-line research data bases) as well as improved use of technology for streamlined administrative processes (e.g. on-line applications, on-line registrations, improved access to "enterprise data").

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2. Impact on the Seminary's Resources: If there are economies in size, then the Jacksonville site must begin to show the way this can be effected. First, it must be run out of the Charlotte Dean's Office. Secondly, in order to ease the administrative workload for Charlotte, a teaching administrator, such as an Assistant Dean, must be recruited and located in Jacksonville. Thirdly, local qualified adjunct faculty will be used for evening classes (meeting either on Monday, Tuesday or Thursday for three hours each session). Fourthly, key name faculty from Charlotte and Hamilton will be asked to offer weekend classes (three hours on Friday night and seven hours on Saturday on one weekend each per month for three months in either the Fall or Spring semesters). Fifthly, as soon as a permanent site can be identified for one of the several sites for classes (it is suggested elsewhere in this proposal that a pilgrim model be used in which classes are held in several churches and sites so that GCTS does not appear to be favoring one particular denomination), video-conferencing from both Hamilton and Charlotte be used for classes after we get into the third year of operation. Sixthly, we will also make it possible for Semlink courses to supplement the offerings so that within a five-year cycle, a student could obtain either an M. Div program, or one of our M.A.s (pending work described in paragraphs 4 and 8). Naturally, as we do in Charlotte (and soon will do in Hamilton) we will also offer an eight course Certificate Program where students complete all requirements along with all the other students in the eight courses.

    Fundraising for Jacksonville will be shared by the Jacksonville Exploratory Committee, soon perhaps to become the Jacksonville Board of Advisors, and the Director for the Southeast Development, currently stationed in Charlotte, N.C.

3. Anticipated Student Demand and Donor Support. Jacksonville represents a growing metropolitan area of 1.2 million in the "Bible Belt" and includes some 1,400 churches in Northeast Florida with no accredited seminary. The Jacksonville Exploratory Committee reports (see attachment B) that based on their research "estimates of first year enrollment potential reach easily into the low hundreds". Our budget assumes 50 new students taking an average of 1.5 courses per year. Potential donor interest from the efforts already being made by the Jacksonville Exploratory Committee demonstrates that in a short period, over one third of the 80 individuals and churches contacted have expressed their willingness to support such a GCTS venture in Jacksonville, FL. The fundraising goal is to have between $25,000 and $40,000 support a year to undergird this program from this region of the country. We would use the Charlotte tuition rate structure as the Jacksonville rate structure.

4. Curricular Plan. What we believe we can offer in courses is now under review by our faculty as well as The Association of Theological Schools ("ATS"). The questions our faculty are deliberating have to do with the use of adjuncts and full-time faculty to assure that it is a bona fide Gordon-Conwell program. Use of adjuncts is easier to administer, but this needs scrutiny in the approval process for discipline competency, teaching ability and theological orthodoxy. Use of full-time faculty guarantees the quality of a Gordon-Conwell education, but becomes

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complicated in the scheduling and additional course load they would carry. The ATS is reviewing the establishment of an extension program with counsel on what percentage of courses may be taken at a non-permanent campus. As progress is made toward these long-term matters, pending approval by the faculty and the Board of Trustees general courses can begin as early as the Fall 2004. These courses will be basic requirements for any degree program, such as Survey of Theology, The Church to the Reformation, The World Mission of the Church, Basic Greek and Hebrew, and Preaching: Principles and Practices.

5. Course Offerings and Means of Delivering Courses. Based on anticipated student demand and faculty workload, the optimal number of courses we believe we can provide to students in each academic year during the next five years is as follows:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Traditional classroom	3	4	6	6	8
Semlink – distance learning	2	2	2	2	2
Video conference	-0-	-0-	-0-	4	6
Total courses available	5	6	8	12	16

The specific courses that would be offered and announced through a five year schedule would be those that both helped us recruit an optimal, growing student body as well as those that, pending approvals, would provide for the completion of a degree in five years (M Div) and published on our web site as a five year projected schedule that encouraged long range planning and thinking by the student and seminary. Semlink, of course, would be effectively integrated into the planning of courses taught on-site. After our third year of operation and subject to the identification of a "permanent video-conference site", the investment could be made in the equipment that allowed for the effective use of video-conferencing courses to Jacksonville from either Hamilton or Charlotte. The five year, ideal mix of traditional classroom, video-conferencing, and Semlink course offerings per semester is as suggested above. Although only 2 Semlink courses per year are indicated above, there are 30 Semlink courses available and up to 10 courses can be used towards an M Div degree. As a result, students could accelerate their completion towards a degree by taking more than 2 Semlink courses per year. The projected combination of traditional classroom, Semlink and video-conferencing will provide the most economical phase to that ideal model. It will also include a good mix of the "week-end model" with evening school model and after the third year of operation, video-conferencing courses from the other two (or three-CUME) campuses.

6. Physical Location of Classrooms. As we have successfully done at CUME, we will use a Pilgrim model as the bases for our class sites. This will help us in our recruitment, for we will not be seen as being either a Baptistic or Reformed option, or the like. It probably would be well for us to have a Jacksonville office out of which the Assistant Dean would operate. For the first three years, we will seek office space that is donated as an "in kind" gift. Wherever classes are held, adequate

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parking should be a consideration. Modest donations would be given to the churches for our use of their facilities, as we do in Boston's CUME.

7. Library and Educational Technology. Approximately $25,000 to $35,000 must be · invested in developing a core library of reference materials, commentaries and the like for theological education. This investment should be made during the first three years. In addition, we will need to "set-aside" per course for "course specific" reserve books at least $500.00 per course each semester (e.g., 4 courses x $500 = $2,000 reserve book costs in addition to reference books) for each of the first five years, depending on how many courses were offered. We will also need to make available to the Jacksonville students the same technology that we are currently planning to offer to our Doctor of Ministry (D. Min.) students. In this way, the library catalogues of both Hamilton and Charlotte would be accessible on-line from Southeastern USA as well as the numerous search engines for bibliographic research. Naturally, they would also enjoy the same borrowing privileges, but through the mail, as resident students do. Several computers and a micro-fiche reader-printer would need to be available at the designated library site, perhaps also near the Assistant Dean's office. A limited number of current periodicals would be located along with the reference and reserve books. Long runs of periodicals would be added on micro-fiche and other less expensive runs of journals as the library budget increased each year.

8. Legal Authorizations and Accreditation Approvals. We would need to gain preliminary approvals from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) as well as from the State of Florida's Commission for Independent Education. Our V.P of Education is investigating what is needed for the first two and the Dean of Charlotte is investigating what will be needed for Florida. The realistic timeframes for responses from each group is unknown at this time, but it may only involve prior notification with the reservation that we pay for two investigators later on from ATS to do a site visit after we are operating. We will budget for some site visit costs by ATS or NEASC (approximately between $2,500 and $3,000) in addition to help for filing any legal papers with the state of Florida ($1,500).

9. Organizational Design. Jacksonville will be viewed by the Seminary as an extension site of Charlotte and under the administrative responsibility of the Charlotte Dean. All enrollment admissions will be processed through Charlotte's enrollment management team. All billings will be centralized through Hamilton's centralized Financial Services Team. The only administrative personnel that will be needed in Jacksonville will be an Assistant Dean and perhaps a part time library attaché to the Charlotte Library staff. It is our hope that upon recommendation of the President, many or all of the Jacksonville Exploratory Committee will be recommended to the Board of Trustees within a two-year period to form a Jacksonville Advisory Board of GCTS. Our plan would be to have this Committee (and later Advisory Board) be our advocates to stir up and maintain a high local

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interest so that we could optimize both fundraising support and an adequate student recruitment base (see attachment D for listing of current support base potential).

10. Exit Strategy: While no one wants to think about such an unpleasant eventuality (for all want to see it succeed), nevertheless, good planning really necessitates that such a plan be in place. Therefore, we must ask (and agree to agree) under what conditions would all parties cordially conclude that the Jacksonville strategy was no longer a viable option? Three factors would dictate the dissolution of the Jacksonville extension site: (1) whenever the average number of students per class fell below an average of 12 students per class; (2) whenever the projected operating results experienced an unfavorable budget variance in excess of $25,000 for two successive years; or (3) whenever the degree production of graduates and certificate holders was not of sufficient number and strategic enough in its impact for the gospel's sake around the world and in the pulpits of southeastern USA, we would cease operations. For the first five years at most, the idea of a permanent site at Jacksonville, or the consideration of another campus in our single institution of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, would be on trial. All books purchased during this period would be carefully identified as belonging to this site and a permanent decision would only be made either about the disposition of these volumes by the Trustees of GCTS or a permanent decision made about the site after the idea proved itself to be worthy from a standpoint of theological excellence, fiscal viability, and strategic ecclesiastical positive outcomes in terms of production of persons returning and remaining in the professional ministry of the church either in the states or abroad.

11. History of the Discussion. The following key dates mark the history of our discussions and decisions up to this point.

March 17, 2003	Dean Bradley and President Kaiser visit Jacksonville
April 28, 2003	GCTS Faculty vote to recommend the teaching of one course in Jacksonville to the Trustees
January 12, 2004	Conference Call with Jacksonville Committee and President Kaiser. Jacksonville Exploratory Committee shares paper entitled "Mutual Expectations"
April 13, 2004	Jacksonville Exploratory Committee shares first draft of "Proposal for Jacksonville Branch" (see attachment B)

12. Next Steps.

April 20, 2004	Present financial plan scenarios for Leadership Team Approval. (see attachment A)
April 20, 2004	Complete draft of "Business Plan" to share with Board.
April 26, 2004	Gain faculty support in proceeding with next steps, including conversations with Jacksonville Exploratory Committee and

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	final plan leading to Board of Trustee action in October 2004.
May 7, 2004	Make progress report to Board of Trustees and gain approval to (1) proceed with "Next Steps" and · (2) accept Jacksonville gifts for legal fees and costs to meet State of Florida regulations and planning costs.
June 4, 2004	Meet with Jacksonville Exploratory Committee to review Board of Trustee actions. Formalize mutual expectations, engage in joint planning and finalize fundraising goals.
June 11, 2004	Make progress report to Executive Committee.
Aug 26, 2004	Leadership Team meeting with Jacksonville Exploratory Committee to finalize mutual expectations and plans.
Sept 17, 2004	Make progress report to Executive Committee.
Oct 15, 2004	Submit final "Business Plan" to Board of Trustees for approval and implementation.

II BUDGET PLAN NARRATIVE

Although the budget plan assumes that the overall five year results will be slightly "in the black", the last year in the budget plan projects a contribution towards institutional overhead approaching $100,000. There are two key investment years in which we should anticipate operating losses – year one ($63,000 loss due to the investment of an assistant dean to develop a student base and the initial capital investment amortized over a smaller enrollment) and year four ($39,000 loss due to the investment in a video-conference classroom). The five-year financial plan is included in Attachment A and, in keeping with past practice, excludes any costs related to institutional overhead. Page 1 of that attachment provides a five year projected statement of revenues and expenses. Page 2 of the attachment provides the assumptions used in developing the five-year budget.

The five-year budget assumes a starting headcount enrollment of fifty (50) students taking, on average, 1.5 courses per student per year – a relatively conservative assumption. Enrollment is projected to increase by year to 80 students, 100 students, 115 students and finally 130 students by year five. In each year, there is an anticipated improvement in the number of course registrations per student per year.

The Seminary will utilize the two-tiered tuition rate structure of the Charlotte campus. This tuition rate is structured to provide a significant incentive for students to enroll in more than one course per semester. Initially, in the case of the Jacksonville extension site, the second of third course in a semester would require the students to enroll in the Semlink distance learning courses. The tuition rate structure charges $840 per course for the first course in the semester. All other registered courses are offered at a steep discount of $540 per course – a 36% discount. We have found this tuition rate structure to be effective in Charlotte to encourage students to take extra courses each semester – including Semlink courses. The Jacksonville extension site projections are using this experience base to estimate registration patterns for that site.

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APPENDIX 4

MINUTES FROM BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

**GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MOTIONS PASSED IN SESSION
January 14, 2005**

Establishment of Extension Sites

Resolved, in recognition that a Gordon-Conwell education must be made affordable and accessible to broader constituencies and that there may be occasions to launch permanent or temporary extension sites, the process for qualifying a Gordon-Conwell extension site, prior to presenting a proposal to the Board of Trustees for authorization of a new site, will include the following general due diligence:

- Identify needs of a multi-denominational, evangelical constituency that cannot reasonably be met through existing seminaries in the region,
- Launch a feasibility study of the site to determine the need, prospects and support for an extension,
- Identify an inviting committee of at least thirty lay leaders and pastors with a core group of eight representing the breadth of the evangelical community,
- A promise of financial support of at least $75,000 in donations for each year of the first five years,
- The enrollment of at least one cohort of 30 students who sign up for six courses per year leading towards a degree or certificate, and
- The provision of a site without cost to the seminary for the first 5 years.

Jacksonville Extension Site

Resolved, that subject to the accomplishment of the standards established in "Approval of Extension Sites," the Administration is authorized to proceed with the establishment of the Jacksonville extension site, which will continue so long as the standard criteria/standards for an extension site are met.

Furthermore, it is resolved that the Jacksonville Extension Site shall be an extension site of the Charlotte campus and be managed by the Charlotte campus. **CARRIED**

Full Cost Accounting

Resolved, that the required promised financial support by an extension site committee begin with $75,000 and if, after full cost accounting, an overage is produced, the required minimum amount for the following year will be reduced. **CARRIED**

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Appendix 2: Growth with Strength Extension Site Criteria

- Five General Criteria for Extension Site Growth
- Standards – Constituency Needs and Capacity
- Standards – Instructional
- Standards – Mentored Ministry and Spiritual Formation
- Standards – Affordability and Financial Vitality

Five Criteria for Extension Site Growth:
Responding to the "Great Commission"

1. **Constituency Need & Capacity** – Prayerfully respond to initiatives of regionally-based church leaders who demonstrate a clearly defined need and a local capacity to support new extension site with students, facilities and donations.

2. **Instruction** – Provide an accessible, relevant and Biblically-based curriculum, schedule, and course offerings contextualized to the region and within the Seminary's instructional support capabilities.

3. **Mentored Ministry and Spiritual Formation** – Offer practical experiences for ministry which include varied mentored relationships through local church partners in diverse settings and cultures. Integrate with local church partners and faculty a program that fosters intentional spiritual formation for students.

4. **Affordability & Financial Vitality** – Provide affordable "cost packages" for students which meet a guaranteed "net revenues per student per year" threshold.

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Suggested Standards:
Constituency Need & Capacity Criteria

1. **Non-Competitive with Peers**– Identified needs of multi-denominational constituency cannot be reasonably met through existing seminaries in the region.

2. **Prayerful Advisory Group** – At least thirty (30) church leaders with a core group of eight (8) are chosen to form a multi-denominational, gender and ethnic advisory board that provides prayerful support, gifts and counsel to the Seminary.

3. **Facilities** – Needed facilities are provided using a Pilgrim model and are provided primarily as "in-kind" support from the local church constituency.

4. **Students** – At least thirty (30) persons form a cohort of degree seeking students taking six courses per year.

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Suggested Standards:
Instructional Criteria

1. **Quality** – The courses will meet all of the excellence standards of courses offered at any Gordon-Conwell campus.

2. **Use of Adjunct Faculty** – No more than half of the courses will be offered by adjunct faculty.

3. **Relation to a Main Campus** – The extension site will be related to a permanent Gordon-Conwell campus and be under the responsibility of that campus dean.

4. **Library Resources** – Students have access to the on-line and book resources of the Seminary's libraries. At least $1,000 per course is invested in on-site reference library for extension site courses.

5. **Course Scheduling** – A five-year course schedule will be published and include a combination of one-week intensives, weekend courses, and other flexible options, including Semlink, to meet the educational needs of the constituency.

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Suggested Standards:
Mentored Ministry and Spiritual Formation

1. **Mentored Ministry**– Students participate in mentored ministry according to catalog and degree requirements.

2. **Spiritual Formation** – Students are provided opportunities to immerse themselves in a spiritual formation program through their mentored ministry setting or through formation opportunities made available at the Pierce Center for Disciple-building at the overseeing campus.

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Suggested Standards:

Affordability & Financial Vitality Criteria

1. **Donations** - $50,000 per year in annual fund support is provided from the local constituency.

2. **Six Courses per Year** – Degree-seeking students financially commit to six courses per year offered through one-week intensives, weekend model intensives, weekday evening schedules, and distance learning.

3. **Student Billing** – Students are billed twice per year (at the fall and spring semesters) for a six-course package. A monthly payment plan is optional.

4. **Administrative Overhead** – An assistant dean (one FTE) is hired to provide administrative support from the overseeing campus. Additional resources are added, as needed, once the extension site grows beyond the initial cohort of 30 students.

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APPENDIX 5

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

GCTS Faculty and Staff

The time frame being addressed is 2003 - February 2006.

Describe the institutional culture, climate, environment that Jax encountered.
- What was the impact of that on Jax? How'd Jax respond to that?

Describe the relationship between South Hamilton and Charlotte.

Describe the communication between South Hamilton and Charlotte.

Describe the flow of information from the institution to the team in Jacksonville.

Describe the level of _____ in South Hamilton, and in Charlotte:
- Interdependence
- Collegiality
- Collaboration
- Decision making
- Connectivity between entities
- Hierarchy
- Unity
- Trust
- Politics
- Rigidity as compared to flexibility
- Inclusivity/exclusivity
- Openness/closedness

How was conflict managed and confrontation handled in Jacksonville?

What was valued in Jax regarding communication?

Describe relationships on the team in Jax....What was valued in Jax regarding relationships on the team?

What was valued in Jax regarding how they functioned?

Describe the decision making process or system in Jacksonville.

Describe the hierarchy in Jacksonville.

Describe the level of _____ in Jax:
- Interdependence
- Collegiality
- Collaboration
- Decision making
- Connectivity between entities
- Hierarchy
- Unity
- Trust
- Politics
- Rigidity as compared with flexibility
- Inclusivity/exclusivity
- Openness/closedness

Exploratory Committee in Jacksonville

The time frame being addressed is 2003 – February 2006.

Describe the institutional culture (climate, environment) that was encountered.
- What was the impact of that on the team in Jacksonville?
- How'd the team in Jacksonville respond to that?

Describe the relationship between South Hamilton and Charlotte.

Describe the communication between South Hamilton and Charlotte.

Describe the flow of information from the institution to the team in Jacksonville.

Describe the level of _____ in South Hamilton, and in Charlotte:
- Interdependence
- Collegiality
- Collaboration
- Decision making
- Connectivity between entities
- Hierarchy
- Unity
- Trust
- Politics
- Rigidity as compared to flexibility
- Inclusivity/exclusivity
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How was conflict managed and confrontation handled in Jacksonville?

What was valued in Jax regarding communication?

Describe relationships on the team in Jax....What was valued in Jax regarding relationships on the team?

What was valued in Jax regarding how they functioned?

Describe the decision making process or system in Jacksonville.

Describe the hierarchy in Jacksonville.

Describe the level of _____ in Jax:
- Interdependence
- Collegiality
- Collaboration
- Decision making
- Connectivity between entities
- Hierarchy
- Unity
- Trust
- Politics
- Rigidity as compared with flexibility
- Inclusivity/exclusivity
- Openness/closedness

How were meetings led in Jax?

What internal and external issues surfaced? How were they dealt with?

How was it determined who was involved, who wasn't?

How were opposing views, disagreements handled in Jax?

Describe the hierarchy in Jax

Describe the process and how information was communicated in Jax.

Homogeneous or Heterogeneous thinking in Jax?

Describe the level of _____ in Jax:
- Interdependence
- Collegiality
- Collaboration
- Decision making

- Connectivity between entities
- Hierarchy
- Unity
- Trust
- Politics
- Rigidity as compared with flexibility
- Inclusivity/exclusivity
- Openness/closedness

What kept the group together?

What kept YOU anchored to this? What about the team kept you involved?

Advisory Committee in Jacksonville

Describe the system or process of communication, relationship, and function on the Jax team when you became a part of it.

What seemed to be valued, a priority, in Jax regarding communication, relationship, and function?

What was the level of openness/closedness, inclusion/exclusion that you experienced in Jax?
- What has your experience been like since you came on board – in regards to participation, having a voice, being regarded, included, etc?

Describe the system or process of communication, relationship, and function within GCTS.
- What was the impact of that on the team?

Describe how meetings and discussions were conducted/led, and how decisions were made on the team in Jax.

How were "issues", both internal and external, dealt with?

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Describe the culture (climate, environment) at GCTS/Jacksonville

2. What seems to valued or a priority to the leadership at GCTS/Jacksonville regarding Communication?

3. What seems to be valued or a priority to the leadership at GCTS/Jacksonville regarding Relationships?

4. What adjectives would you use to describe the style and commitment to Communication as demonstrated by the leadership at GCTS/Jacksonville?

5. What adjectives would you use to describe the style and commitment to Relationships as demonstrated by the leadership at GCTS/Jacksonville?

6. How open to your input, ideas, feedback, suggestions, observations, etc. has the leadership of GCTS/Jacksonville been?

7. How closed to your input, ideas, feedback, suggestions, observations, etc. has the leadership of GCTS/Jacksonville been?

8. How has your experience at GCTS/Jacksonville, as well as your life and ministry, been impacted by the culture of Communication and Relationships at GCTS/Jacksonville?

9. Describe the degree of _____ that you have experienced at GCTS/Jacksonville?

	Not so much	Somewhat	A goodly amount	Quite a bit	Very Much
Collaboration					
Unity					
Trust					
Rigidity					
Flexibility					
Collegiality					
Inclusiveness					
Exclusivity					
Openness					
Closedness					

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VITA

Kent Dean Gilbert was born the second of three children to Earl and Gayle Gilbert on September 10, 1953 in Wabasha, MN. Raised in NE Iowa, he was included in the family move to Chicago in January 1972. The next 3+ years brought a B.A. in Radio/Television Communications from the University of Illinois/Chicago, and the start of what would be a 31 year relationship with Young Life.

He matriculated to Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA for the fall 1975 term, while simultaneously joining the Young Life staff and entering a three year training program. He completed his M.A. in Theology in June 1978. In September 1978, he became part of the YL staff team in Ann Arbor, MI.

While in Ann Arbor, he married Nancy Larsen on August 15, 1981. Having not extinguished California from his blood, they moved to Santa Cruz in June 1984 where he became the YL Area Director. Both their daughters, Nicole and Kiersten, were born there, in 1985 and 1987, respectively.

A move to Jacksonville, FL in 1992 as the YL Metro Director, and later as a Regional Director, completed their warm weather pursuit. Leaving the YL staff in July 2003 precipitated his becoming part of the effort to secure the GCTS extension site in Jacksonville. He accepted the position of Assistant to the Dean in Jacksonville in August 2005, where he remained until beginning a position on the staff of First Presbyterian Church in June 2010, where he currently ministers.

This thesis-project was written following annual D.Min. residencies in 2007-2009. He expects to graduate in May 2011.